

## **I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy**

Years ago, a friend of our family, who struggled with alcoholism, jokingly made the above statement. The idea of partitioning the human brain, as with a lobotomy, came to my mind this morning as I contemplated the irrationality of fundamentalist Christian theology. How is one able to believe that God is both loving and at the same time unimaginably cruel and hateful at the same time? How can any rational person take pleasure in a loving relationship with God, knowing that the same God they worship will be torturing most of humanity in a place called Hell for all eternity? How will anyone be able to enjoy the pleasures of Heaven one day, and at the same time remain aware of what is going on in Hell. The most common answer that I get from believers in ECT (Eternal Conscious Torment) is that God will “lobotomize” (my word, not theirs) them when they get to heaven and remove the memory of their loved ones in Hell. This is sort of like the ostrich that sticks its head in the sand, pretending that the outside world is not really there.

Yesterday, I spent a few minutes on the phone with the head of a very large and fast growing charismatic Christian movement. Their website was full of positive affirmations about God's love and power to change lives. Because there was no statement of faith on that website, I thought they might be open to the doctrine of universal reconciliation. When I asked their leader if he believed that God would be sending most of humanity to everlasting punishment in a place called hell, he dodged the question and would not answer me directly. I asked the question several different ways. In each case, I did not get a direct answer. He did emphatically state, however, that he never mentions Hell or anything negative in any of his messages. This man has successfully “lobotomized” his followers into pretending that the elephant of “Eternal Conscious Torment” in a place called Hell is not really in the room.

Sadly, there is no room for “people like me” in the evangelical Christian church today, mainly because I take seriously the Bible teaching that God is love. Any theology that portrays God as unloving, unforgiving, and unable or unwilling to save all of His “lost sheep” is not Biblical, in my view.