

Engaging World Religions

Session 1: Introduction: World Religions & Religious Pluralism

What is Religious Pluralism? [Defining some terms]



Religious Pluralism: Every religion is true. Each provides a genuine encounter with the Ultimate. One may be better than the others, but all are adequate.

More on these in Lesson 2

Relative Truth: All religions are true to the one believing it

Exclusivism: Jesus is the Only one way

Inclusivism: Jesus is the means of salvation, but God allows other ways for people to come to Him

Universalism: Everyone will be saved

Why is Religious Pluralism so Prevalent?

57%

Evangelical Christians agree

- **Relativism:** No absolute truth.
Christian Worldview says that God/His Word is the Standard
- **Globalism:** Every culture is in our backyard
"While missionaries have long gone out from American locations to the rest of the world, the rest of the world now is coming to America."
- **'Sloganism':** Slogans, Bumper Stickers, Memes, and one-liners

Answering Popular Slogans

- **There are so many religions, so there can't be only one true religion**
"When I was 10 years old, I asked my mother, 'If there's only one god, why are there so many religions?' I have been pondering that question ever since, and the conclusion I've come to is that all religions are true." (George Lucas)



Every religion has a piece of the truth.
All have some, none have all

Six Blind Men & the Elephant: It's a snake, tree, rope, fan, wall, spear

PROBLEM

- None of the men were actually right, but...
- The storyteller claims to have all the truth.
So he has an exclusive claim

- **It is arrogant/intolerant to believe there is only one way and everyone else is wrong**

Everyone, including religious pluralists, are exclusive.

It isn't intolerant if you are right. If something is right, then all other alternatives are necessarily wrong.

Many possible answers doesn't mean there isn't one correct answer.

5 + 5 = 10, 12, 34, dog, ?

Select One

- ☒ Choice One
- ☒ Choice Two
- ☒ Choice Three
- ☒ Choice Four

Central Passage: Isaiah 42:8

"I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols."



3 Worldviews

Theism: God made all

Pantheism: God is all

Atheism: No God at all

Worldviews are exclusive :: Religions are exclusive

3

Principles of Logic

- Law of Identity
- Law of Non-Contradiction
- Law of Excluded Middle

- **People that believe in other religions are so sincere**

People can be sincerely wrong. Sincerity is not a gauge for truthfulness

TRUTH is OBJECTIVE, not SUBJECTIVE

- **All religions basically teach the same things**

"There are a million ways to be a human being, and many paths to what you call 'god'...there couldn't possibly be just one way" (Oprah Winfrey)

"The essential message of all religions are very much the same" (Dalai Lama)



Many paths to God

SUGAR or Cyanide?



PROBLEMS

- Who is waiting for you at the top of the Mountain?
 - A personal God
 - Many gods
 - No God at all
- There are initial similarities, like ethics and morality...BUT there are major DIFFERENCES!
Like the Nature of...
 - God/Jesus
 - the Bible
 - Man
 - Sin
 - Salvation
 - Heaven
 - Hell
 - And more...

CONCLUSION:

- Sincerity is not enough
- Blending all religions denies each of its own uniqueness
- Differences Matter!

Does the Bible claim there is only

ONE WAY

More on this in Lesson 2

Engaging World Religions

Session 1: Religious Pluralism is NOT a valid option:

Recap/Conclusion

Religious Pluralism: Every religion is true. Each provides a genuine encounter with the Ultimate. One may be better than the others, but all are adequate.

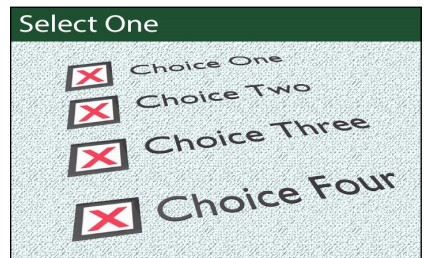
Slogans used by pluralists...

- There are so many religions, so there can't be only one true religion
- It is arrogant/intolerant to believe there is only one way and everyone else is wrong
- People that believe in other religions are so sincere
- All religions basically teach the same things



NOT TRUE.

DIFFERENCES MATTER!!!



While there are initial similarities, like ethics and morality...there are major DIFFERENCES!

Like the Nature of...

- God/Jesus
- Man
- Sin
- Salvation
- Heaven/Hell
- the Bible



Every religion has Exclusive claims

3 Principles of Logic

- Law of Identity
(Something has an identity, characteristics, that makes it what it is)
The balloon is yellow, made of latex, has air inside, has a string attached, etc.
These characteristics make it a balloon and not an airplane.
- Law of Non-Contradiction
(Something cannot be both A and B at the same time)
The balloon is Yellow. It cannot also be Blue, because they are contradictory qualities
- Law of Excluded Middle
(Something must be either true or false. There is no in between option.)
The balloon is Yellow. That statement must be either true or false.



If all religions have exclusive claims, then Logically we have come to the conclusion that:

- Either ALL religions are FALSE

OR

- One religion is TRUE

BUT

- more than one religion can't be true because they all have contradictory beliefs.



Why can't we simply pick and choose elements of different religions to form our own?

Because... while you could pick and choose elements that relate to how to live, religions address issues that are outside of our knowledge and ability to know on our own without an authoritative source that knows the answers.

This is where cults often originate. Someone accepts an authoritative source, like the Bible, but has a problem with certain parts, like Hell, and therefore write them out of their belief system.

**THIS MEANS,
THAT IF YOU
FIND ONE
RELIGION TO
BE TRUE,
ALL OTHER
RELIGIONS
MUST BE FALSE**



How do we know that Christianity is the correct belief (faith)?

**We examine the claims!!!
We look at the evidence!!!**

