



Why Christianity...?
In A Pluralistic World

The Essentials of Apologetics




Introduction

How do most people approach spiritual truth?


Does Your Choice Affect Whether a Belief is True?



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“It all comes down to pairing your personal inclinations with dogma while paring down the dozens of faiths covered in the book ... **You have to pay attention to the initial attraction.** But what about the lifestyle and values? **Do they really match yours?**”

RELIGION TO FIT YOUR LIFESTYLE
AND AFTERLIFE GOALS!

**THE SAVVY
CONVERT'S
GUIDE TO**


**CHOOSING
A RELIGION**

**MOST
APPROVED
BY GOD!**

**COMPARE AND
CONTRAST BEFORE
YOU COMMIT**

- ▶ CONSIDER PERKS AND DRAWBACKS FOR EACH RELIGION
- ▶ GET THE BEST FAITH FOR YOUR BUCK
- ▶ UNDERSTAND THE TIME REQUIRED BEFORE COMMITTING

99 RELIGIONS TO CHOOSE FROM!



“The soul of religion is one, but
it is encased in a multitude of
forms.”
- Gandhi



What is Pluralism?

An Overview of the Prevailing Philosophy Concerning Spirituality

In general, pluralism is “the process by which the number of options in the private sphere of modern society rapidly multiplies at all levels, especially at the level of worldview, faiths, and ideologies.”
– D. A. Carson



Three Kinds of Pluralism

1. Empirical Pluralism
2. Cherished Pluralism
3. Philosophical Pluralism



Empirical Pluralism

- Empirical pluralism simply refers to the fact that we live in a diverse society with different tastes and preferences.
- For example, America is a country of many languages, ethnicities, religions, and worldviews.
- Empirical pluralism encourages alternatives and makes it easy for an individual to make personal choices that are agreeable to them.



Cherished Pluralism

- Cherished pluralism takes empirical pluralism and adds an additional ingredient – approval.
- Missionary Leslie Newbiggin explains cherished pluralism as: “not merely a society which is in fact plural in the variety of cultures, religions, and lifestyles which it embraces, but pluralist in the sense that this plurality is celebrated as things to be approved and cherished”.
- Cherished pluralism says that a person must nod in agreement with a stance and in no way condemn something as wrong.



Philosophical Pluralism

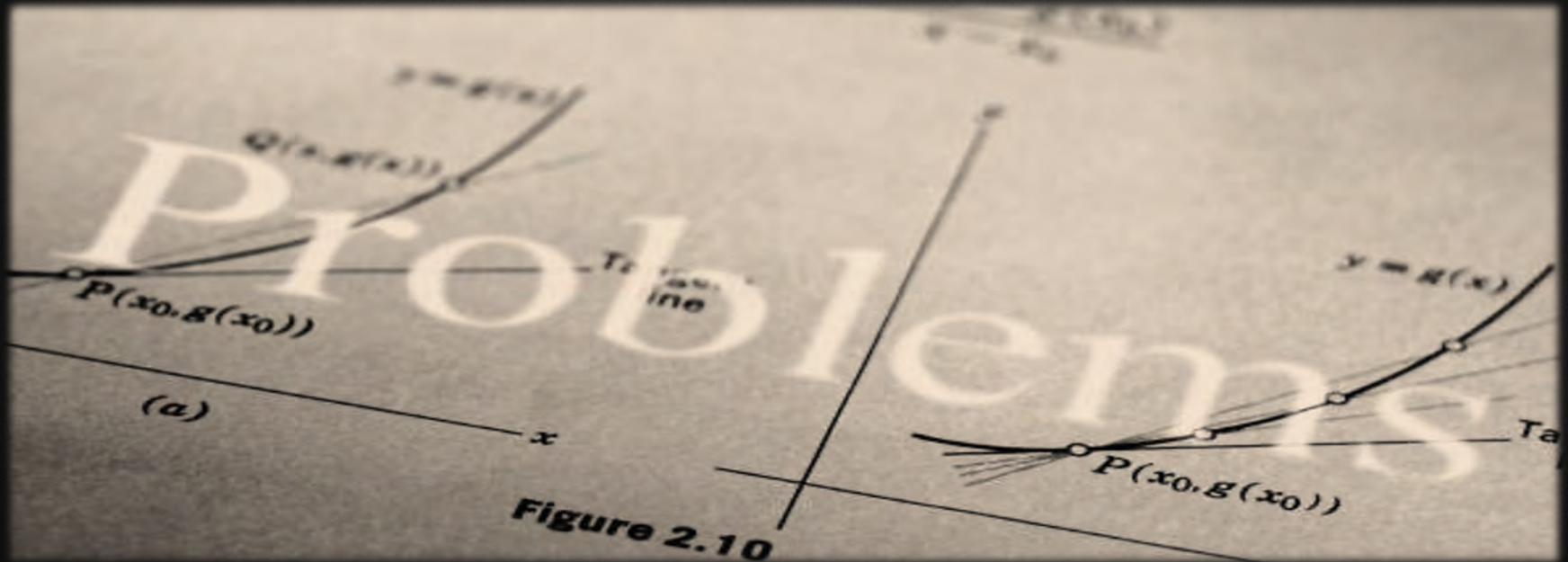
- Philosophical pluralism naturally flows from celebrated pluralism and says that no religion has the right to pronounce itself right or true and the other competing faiths false, or even relatively inferior.
- For those who espouse a philosophical religious pluralism, there is no longer any heresy, except perhaps the view that there are heresies.



What's Wrong With Pluralism?

Isn't Choice a Good Thing?

The Issues with Philosophical Pluralism



1. It is self-defeating.
2. It confuses taste and truth.
3. It causes tolerance to trump truth.
4. It ignores the law of non-contradiction.

Philosophical Pluralism is Self-Defeating

- Philosophical Pluralism says that every worldview, religion, and viewpoint is equal and true.
- However, Pluralism rejects the Christian claim of there only being one and only way to God (Jesus)
- So Pluralism excludes Christianity and therefore does not adhere to its philosophy of accepting all beliefs as true.



“Pluralism cannot survive if Jesus Christ is the unique way to God. So the pluralist has to try to explain away the evidence for the incarnation and the resurrection. The pluralist has to reject the Trinity and salvation only coming through Jesus. He simply cannot allow the Christian faith to be what it claims to be.”
- Paul Copan

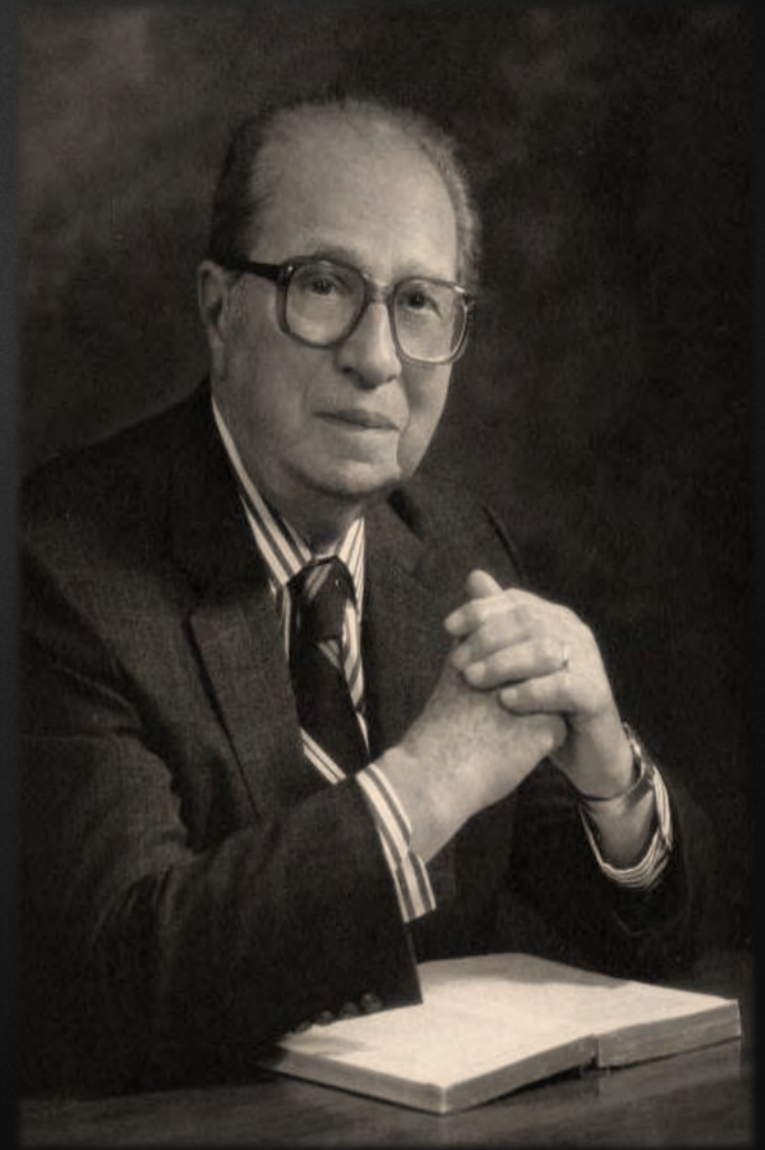


Philosophical Pluralism Confuses Taste/Truth

- Pluralism fails to make the distinction between matters of opinion (e.g. I like chocolate and you don't) and matters of truth (e.g. one true God exists).
- A person's opinion or desire cannot change reality.



“Pluralism is desirable and tolerable only in those areas that are matters of taste rather than matters of truth.”
- Mortimer Adler



Pluralism Causes Tolerance to Trump Truth

- Pluralism prizes tolerance above truth because it does not recognize any view as being objectively true.
- But should society tolerate every view, belief and behavior?
- What about Nazism, racism, and other such beliefs?
- How about tolerating those who say $2+2=5$? Should such claims be embraced and accepted?



An Important Reminder

Pluralism fails to understand that, while all people have equal worth, **not all ideas do...**



Pluralism Ignores the Law of Non-Contradiction

- Pluralism ignores one of the foundational laws of logic – the law of non-contradiction.
- The law of non-contradiction says that something cannot be “A” and “Non-A” at the same time and in the same sense.
- Pluralism turns a blind eye to the fact that worldviews teach radically different things about critical things; they cannot all be right.



“Let him who disbelieves [in the law of non-contradiction] be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten and burned is not the same thing as to not be beaten and burned.”
– Avicenna



“We believe that all religions are basically the same,

At least the one that we read was.

They all believe in love and goodness.

They only differ on matters of creation sin heaven hell God and salvation.”

- Excerpt of Creed, by Steve Turner



Another Result of Pluralism – Syncretism



- Pluralism tends to be very syncretistic in nature, forming new selections from existing choices.
- In much the same way a person may walk down a buffet line and place various foods on their plate to form a unique meal, a philosophical pluralist will stride through the various religions of the world and select from them certain doctrines or positions that appeal to them.
- These beliefs are then melded into something entirely new, yet something that must be immediately accepted into the pluralist culture as being valid and equal to other existing beliefs.

Overcoming Pluralism

The Truth about Exclusivity and Christianity

Key Question

Is Exclusivity wrong /
bad...?

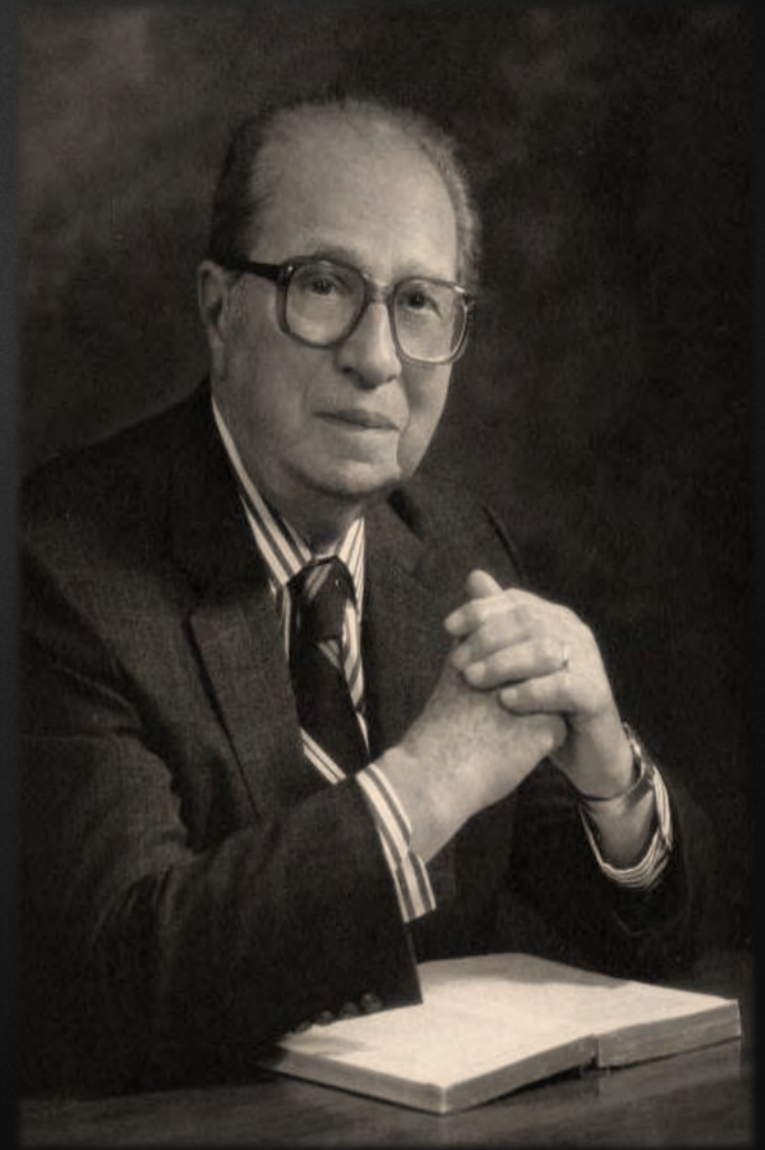


Exclusivity is Required for Many Things

- **In Marriage:** While many people exist, saying 'yes' to your spouse means say 'no' to all others.
- **In Government:** While many political systems exist, only one system can be embraced and coherently implemented at one time.
- **In Economic Policy:** While many economic systems exist, only one can be practiced in a society.
- **In Mathematics:** While many answers exist, only one answer can be correct to a math problem.



“The truth or falsity of entertained propositions is absolute and immutable. The correctness of the judgments we make about them is relative and mutable.”
- Mortimer Adler



Why Exclusivity is Important

- Should I take an antacid or chemotherapy for a stomach ache?
- The answer depends on the question: “What is wrong with my stomach?”
- Truth and getting correct answers to important questions is vital.
- What are the major questions when it comes to life?



The Major Questions in Life

1. What is the most basic metaphysical reality?
2. What is the fundamental human problem?
3. What is the solution to that problem?



The Most Basic Metaphysical Reality?

- There is a single, infinite, personal God that created everything that is known.
- This God is a Trinity, a Unity in diversity, consisting of three distinct Persons bound together by a loving relationship.
- Attributes of God include omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolent, and many more.



The Fundamental Human Problem?

- Humankind was created in the image of God, but utilized free will to chose disobedience to God over following God's path.
- The end result is that every person alive is born separated from God and spiritually dead, with a propensity to sin and choose evil over good.
- Further, a person's body is corrupted from the sin disease and is destined to perish.
- Each person cannot save him/herself and is need of help.



The Solution to the Human Problem?

- God's solution was to have a Savior come and represent both parties to pay the penalty for the committed sin.
- The Savior must be God to represent God and be sinless. The Savior must be man to represent fallen man, living under the law (Gal. 4:4-5).
- The second person of the Trinity, the Son, came via the incarnation and became the sacrifice to justify man before God, and then be raised from the dead to give life to those who were devoid of spiritual life.



Conclusions

Final Thoughts

Final Important Reminders

- People having a right to adopt any religion, or no religion, if they wish.
- Religious variety exists, but they cannot all be correct.
- Various faiths having some true positions (e.g. Buddhists are right that suffering is universal; Muslims are right that there is one God; Hindus are right that the Ultimate is infinite; Jews are right that God spoke through the Hebrew prophets).



Could There Have Been Another Way to God?

"And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, **if it is possible**, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."" - Matthew 26:39



Jesus Says He is the Only Way to God

- “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” – Matt. 7:13-14.
- “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.” – John 14:6.
- “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” – John 3:16-18.



Jesus Also Warns Against Being Wrong

- “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, **both will fall into a pit.**” - Matthew 15:14
- “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**” - Matthew 23:15



Do All Roads Lead to God...? Yes They Do!

- Because God exists, when you die you will meet Him.
- You will meet Him regardless of the path you've chosen.
- You will meet Him regardless of the road that you're on.
- **But what then...?**



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