



One Way? Is Christianity the Only Truth?

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What about other religions? When the world is moving in such a globalizing way, believing in one truth seems naive at best, and intolerant at worst. This workshop will examine the contours of relativism, and will look closely at a couple of classic religions. We will focus on the ways these views handle the problem of evil, and map out some strategies for making sensitive truth claims.

Overview

In the contemporary world holding to a single truth appears arrogant at best, dangerous at worst. The increasing mobility of the people and their ideas renders truth claims implausible. Yet the historic Christian faith holds that Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father but by him. This seminar will explore ways to affirm truth in its unity and diversity as essential for living in the reality of this world.

Outline

1. The scandal of uniqueness

- 1.1 World statistics
- 1.2 The implausibility of a single truth

2. The scandal of relativism

- 2.1 Traditional controlled societies
- 2.2 Modern relativism
- 2.3 Postmodern relativism
- 2.4 De-privatizing
- 2.5 De-secularizing
- 2.6 Powerless spirituality

3. What is the question?

- 3.1 Inadequate solutions
 - 3.1.1 Vatican II
 - 3.1.2 Protestant liberalism

- 3.1.3 Inclusivism
- 3.2 Biblical considerations
 - 3.2.1 Romans 1: does revelation get through?
 - 3.2.2 John 14:6-7: Is Christ uniquely the way, truth and life?
 - 3.2.3 What is truth? What is it not?

4. Reassuring biblical pluralities

- 4.1 The diversity of creation
- 4.2 All sorts and conditions
- 4.3 Truth and civil charity
 - 4.3.1 The church in ancient Rome
 - 4.3.2 Modern reform movements
- 4.4 Religious certainty and violence
 - 4.4.1 Theocracy
 - 4.4.2 Wars and clashes

5. Thoughts on the Trinity

Suggested Reading

Peter L. Berger, ed: *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Washington: E. & P. P. C.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999

_____: *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1979

Walter Brueggemann & George Stroup, eds.: *Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World*. Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1998

G. K. Chesterton: *Orthodoxy*. New York: Doubleday, 1959

William V. Crockett & James G. Sigountos, eds.: *Through No Fault of Their Own? The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991

Steve D. Gaede: *When Tolerance Is No Virtue*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993

James F. Harris: *Against Relativism: A Philosophical Defense of Method*. LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1992

S. Mark Heim: *Is Christ the Only Way?*, Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1985

Peter Kreeft: *Between Heaven and Hell*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982

Vishal Mangalwadi: *The World of the Gurus*, rev. ed. New Dehli: Nevedit Good Books

Stephen Neill: *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984

Harold A. Netland: *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991

Lesslie Newbigin: The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Geneva: WCC, 1989

_____: Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Message. Grand Rapids: Eerdman; Geneva: WCC, 1991

Os Guinness: The Devil's Gauntlet: The Church and the Challenge of Society. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989

Michael Polanyi & Harry Prosch: Meaning. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1975