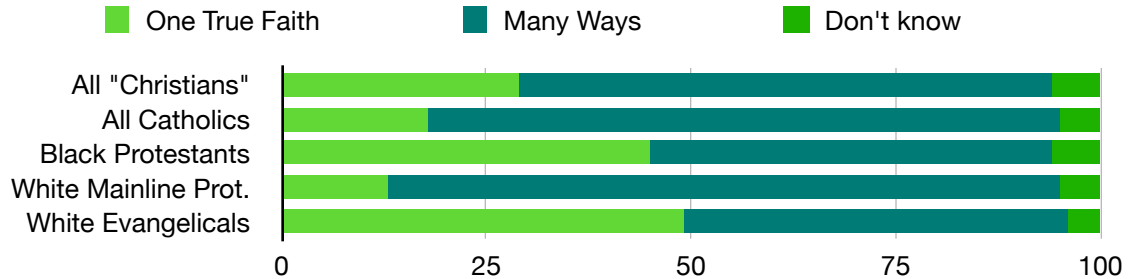


Common Challenges to the Faith: Aren't There Many Ways to God?

Key Verse: **John 14:6, Acts 4:12**

1. The state of the world today



1. Polling from Pew Research Center 2008 (“A majority of all American Christians (52%) think that at least some non-Christian faiths can lead to eternal life. Indeed, among Christians who believe many religions can lead to eternal life, 80% name at least one non-Christian faith that can do so.” —<https://www.pewforum.org/2008/12/18/many-americans-say-other-faiths-can-lead-to-eternal-life/>)
2. Bumpersticker Ideology
 1. COEXIST: There is nothing wrong with “coexisting” with other religions. That’s just being decent people and not trying to wipe out those you disagree with. The original coexist logo featured only three religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. For some, the “Coexist” sticker is merely a call for all faiths to get along peacefully with each other, BUT for many more, it’s actually treated as a claim that all religions are equal and equally true.
 2. TOLERANCE: What does tolerance really mean? How is it being used today? If I’m saying that heterodox (not biblical) views are ‘true’ or ‘right’ am I tolerating them? NO! I’m approving of them. There’s a difference. We can be respectful and peaceful, and tolerant in the real meaning of the word, but if we cross over into approval of what we know to be wrong, we are taking part in another’s sin.
3. Views of religious truth:
 1. Pluralism says every religion is true. Each provides a genuine encounter with the “ultimate.”
 2. Relativism says every religion is true for the one adhering to it—that religious truth is subjective, not objective.
 3. Inclusivism says one religion is explicitly true and others are implicitly true.
 4. **Exclusivism** says only one religion is true and what is opposed to it in other religions is false.
4. Views of Truth in general
 1. Truth is not:
 1. What works (Pragmatism)
 2. What coheres (Coherentism)

3. What explains the most data (Comprehensivism)
 4. What is existentially relevant (Existentialism)
 5. What feels good/satisfies (Subjectivism)
 6. For more see: Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology in one Volume*, 968.
2. Truth is the way things actually are (Correspondence)
 1. Notice that the only way of judging whether pragmatism works is if it corresponds to reality. In fact all the other theories of truth are reliant on correspondence theory of truth.
 2. Truth does ‘work’, and comprehensive truth coheres. Truth is as comprehensive as reality, and ultimately what is most existentially relevant IS what corresponds to reality. Finally, feelings and satisfaction are relative. If men love darkness rather than light (John 3:19) then they are going to love error that comforts rather than truth that preserves and purges the comfortable evil they cling to.
 3. Fundamental laws of thought
 1. **Law of Identity (A is A)** — “A rose is a rose is a rose...” In arguments, violations of the law of identity often result in what we call equivocation. [Example could be use of the word ‘Evolution’ as change over time, change within a species (microevolution) or change between species (macroevolution).]
 2. **Law of noncontradiction (A is not non-A)** can be expressed as: Two things cannot be contradictory and yet true in the same way at the same time. If I come up to you and your spouse and I asked you when the baby is due, and one of you says “in three months” and the other says “she’s not pregnant,” I’m not going to think I got a real answer. I’m going to think I was misunderstood by one of you, or that you really need marital counseling.
 3. **Law of Excluded Middle (Either A or non-A)**: to follow on the last illustration, you can’t be both pregnant and non-pregnant. You are either one or the other.
 4. Notice that all three of these are tautologies (or self-evident statements).
 5. Application: At some level all religions are exclusive. If they didn’t make exclusive claims what would make them different from any other? But to have differing/contradicting truth claims means they can’t both be true (law of non-contradiction and law of identity). So Pluralism, relativism and inclusivism don’t work (I recognize that this is an oversimplification but I don’t want to spend too much time on this). It’s logically possible for all religions to be false, but only one can be true.
2. What does the Bible say?
 1. There is one God

1. The Lord is God. Besides Him there is no other (Deuteronomy 4:35)
 2. The Lord is God in heaven above and earth below (Deuteronomy 4:39-40)
 3. There is no other God. Not even God can think of another... (Isaiah 44:6-8)
 4. Idols are not God and cannot save (Isaiah 45:18-25)
 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God... (Ephesians 4:4-6)
 6. Believing that God is one is not enough to be saved (James 2:18-19)
2. One way of salvation
 1. Everyone who puts their faith in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through His name (Acts 10:42-43)
 2. Salvation is found in no one else but Jesus (Acts 4:12)
 3. Eternal life is through Jesus (John 3:14-16; 6:35-40; 10:27-30)
 4. Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned (John 3:18)
 5. Jesus said he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life and the only way to the Father (John 14:6)
 3. One mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:3-6)
 4. One Gospel
 1. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16-17)
 2. Even if we (Paul) or an angel from heaven should preach another Gospel, let them be eternally condemned (Galatians 1:6-9)
 3. The Bible is very clear. There is one Gospel, telling the one truth about the way of salvation through the substitutionary atonement worked by Jesus Christ our savior, who is the one mediator between God and man. We need to be ready to answer to everyone who asks us a reason for the hope that is in us, with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).