



Why Talk About Other Religions?

- We live in an ever-increasing world of religious diversity.
- Northern Virginia is a microcosm of this diversity, yet we know little about what our neighbors, co-workers and friends believe.
- How can we as Christians build bridges of understanding, seek peace in the world, love our neighbors as ourselves, and appropriately and positively share the gospel?
- How do we have conversations with others if we do not know what they believe to be true?

Why Are There So Many Different Religions?

- A survey of human history clearly shows that human beings have had religious experiences, questions, and a need to worship One greater than ourselves.
- Some claim that having a multitude of religions is proof that God does not exist, or God would have made the one true way clear so that everyone everywhere would believe the same thing.
- Throughout time and independently from each other, people of every culture on every continent sense a deep need to worship a Creator. That points to the ultimate reality and existence of God.

God Is Beyond Our Ability To Comprehend Him Fully

God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge are so deep that it is impossible to explain his decisions or to understand his ways. Romans 11:33 (GWT)

Our knowledge is incomplete and our ability to speak what God has revealed is incomplete...Now we see a blurred image in a mirror... 1 Corinthians 13:9, 12a (GWT)

Doesn't it make sense that people from different cultures living on different continents would explain their experiences with God in differing ways?

Christians view every faith, place, book and prophet through the lens of Jesus who said:

...“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me...”

John 14:6 (NIV)

“...I and the Father are one.”

John 10:30 (NIV)

How Should Christians View Other Religions?

- 2/3 of the world's population are not Christians.
- Many of them long to know, love and serve God as they understand.

Three Ways Christians Understand Salvation

Christian _____

- All faiths are equally true and valid
- All basically believe and say the same thing

Problems:

- Saying that does not honor the faith of anyone
- It fails to differentiate between the logic, validity and merit of various religious claims

Christian _____

- All must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior or be condemned to hell
- Does not matter if the person of another faith is earnest and devout, nor if they are genuinely seeking God, nor if they have not had a serious and genuine opportunity to receive Christ

Problems:

- Many claim this does not mesh with the spirit of the gospel
- Paints a picture of God who punishes and condemns 2/3 of the world's population
- Ignores Jesus' overwhelming passion for the lost

Christian _____

- Jesus is the definitive revelation of God—He is God in the flesh
- Jesus came for the salvation of the world
- Salvation is a free gift received by God's grace through faith
- Old Testament heroes received salvation by faith

But God was merciful! We were dead because of our sins, but God loved us so much that he made us alive with Christ, and God's wonderful kindness is what saves you... You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve. This is God's gift to you, and not anything you have done on your own. It isn't something you have earned, so there is nothing you can brag about. Ephesians 2:4–5, 8–9 (CEV)

- C.S. Lewis, John Wesley, John Stott and Billy Graham accept
- God examines the hearts of people of other faiths, and if their love and trust in God is true, God will credit their faith to them as righteousness

...“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me...” John 14:6 (NIV)

- Consider: The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is essential for salvation. If a faithful adherent of another faith who never had the opportunity to know Jesus were admitted to heaven, it would only be possible because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

- All people will one day stand before the Lord, and...

...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord...

Philippians 2:10–11 (NIV)