

Is Christ Really the Only Way? The Problem of Pluralism

Introduction:

In *Nathan the Wise*, Lessing uses a story of the three rings to demonstrate that no one can determine which religion is true. While he was only referring to the three main monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) today we face many more religions. As we grow more religiously diverse, people believe the only way to maintain peace is to get rid of certain, exclusive beliefs. Is it wrong for Christians to think Jesus is the only way?

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

I. The Way

A. Idea of Pluralism

1. Religions are different paths up the same mountain
2. Religions are the same ethically
3. Religions all point to the same Reality

B. Arguments for Pluralism

1. Pluralism claims to be the answer to religious intolerance and oppression
2. Pluralism claims to make sense of the ineffable nature of religious experience

3.Pluralism claims to best deal with the religious and cultural diversity of the world.

C. Problems of Pluralism

1.Pluralism does not lead to tolerance

2.Pluralism redefines religions into a new religion

a. It changes the idea of God into an ineffable idea of the Real

b. It changes the goal of religion to ethics

3.Pluralism ignores the law of non-contradiction

4.Pluralism makes a massive truth claim

II. The Truth

A. Relativism has come to dominate much of our thinking. In relativism, religions are not different paths up a mountain, but different mountains altogether

B. Ultimately, a relativistic approach to religions crumbles under the same difficulty as relativism in general—it is a self-defeating philosophy.

C. Answering Objections

1.“It is arrogant to claim to know the truth.”

2. “You can believe what you want, but don’t try to push your view on others.”
3. “It’s not loving to tell others only Jesus can save them.”
4. “Religious beliefs are just culturally-conditioned—you would not be a Christian if you were born in Pakistan.”

III. The Life

A. Historical Truth

1. Evaluating between religions is not a matter of opinion—like determining which soft drink is the best. It’s an issue of historical reality. Jesus Christ really lived, died, and rose again.

B. Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

1. Other religions claim to show the way, but Jesus said He was the Way.
2. If Jesus is God in human flesh and died to pay for our sins, then there can really be no other way.

C. Uniqueness of Salvation

1. It is not based on us, but based on God

2. Not all paths lead up the mountain. We need someone who has been to the top of the mountain to come and rescue us.

3. It is good news for all of creation

4. It deals with our greatest need—internal transformation

D. Crucified Savior

Conclusion: Jesus is the only way, because He alone is God and He alone provides salvation.