

Only One True Religion? Part 2

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 7-13-16

Attempts to Discourage Religious Exclusivity

Our culture has attempted to discourage Christianity's claims to have "the truth"

Problem of idea creep - seeps into the consciousness and language even of those _____ the church

We desire to engage our culture. Our vision/mission - "We are a Christ-centered community of Holy Love that draws people into worship of the Triune God and disciples them to minister to their world."

Axiom #1 - "All major religions are equally valid and basically teach the same thing."

Religious pluralism (RP) -

- More than mere _____. A religious position that tolerates everything but religious intolerance.
- More than sharing certain values & cooperation across religious lines. Requires equal credence.
- RP accuses those who claim exclusive truth of _____.

The doctrinal differences between Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism are _____ and _____.

Problems:

- Mutually _____ claims
 - Irreconcilable beliefs
 - The differences concerning Jesus are not superficial.
- This insistence that doctrine doesn't matter is itself a _____ position.
- RP holds a specific view of the divine, which is touted as superior and more enlightened than the beliefs of most world religions.
 - Religious pluralists do the very thing RP supposedly forbids.
 - Who is the real bigot?

Axiom #2 - "Each religion sees *part* of spiritual truth, but none can see the whole truth."

The blind men and the elephant - "All of you are right. And all of you are wrong."

Problems:

- Told from the perspective of someone who is _____.
 - How could anyone know that each blind man only sees part of the elephant unless *someone* claims to be able to see the whole elephant?
- This axiom assumes a superior, comprehensive knowledge of spiritual reality that you just claimed none of the religions have.
 - Has only the _____ of humility

Axiom #3 - "Religious belief is too culturally and historically conditioned to be 'truth.'"

All moral and spiritual claims are the product of a particular historical and cultural moment.

- Beliefs are socially conditioned
- It is impossible to judge the rightness or wrongness of competing beliefs

Absolute relativism - There is no objective, universal _____.

Problems:

- This axiom itself is a comprehensive claim held to be universally true for every individual.
 - Relativism relativizes itself!
- Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga:
 - "Suppose we concede that if I had been born of Muslim parents in Morocco rather than Christian parents in Michigan, my beliefs would have been quite different. But the same goes for the pluralist...If the pluralist had been born in Morocco he probably wouldn't be a pluralist. Does it follow that...his pluralist beliefs are produced in him by an unreliable belief-producing process?"
 - Even the pluralist is in some way a product of their context.
 - You can't say, "All claims about religions are culturally/historically conditioned...except the one I am making right now."
- Non sequitur - an argument with a conclusion that does not follow from its premises