



THEOLOGY PUB



WELCOME TO THEOLOGY PUB, SOME GROUND RULES:

- **Everyone's voice has the right to be heard**
- **If your voice is causing others NOT to be heard...take a break and *listen***
- **There won't be any "wrap up" in the end, no sense of "this is what you should believe."
We gather here together as seekers, all on our own spiritual journeys.**
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Some questions to think about:

- What does it mean to live in a multi-faith world?
- How can we respectfully have conversations about those things that matter most to us?
- How do we live together well, with people who share very different core beliefs from one another?
- Are all religions the same? Is it fair to say that when each seem to have some very unique beliefs?
Are we doing a disservice trying to say they're the same?

What is pluralism *(courtesy of Wikipedia - the source of all ultimate truth)*

- As the name of the worldview according to which one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus that at least some truths and true values exist in other religions.
- As acceptance of the concept that two or more religions with mutually exclusive truth claims are equally valid. This posture often emphasizes religion's common aspects.
- Sometimes as a synonym for ecumenism, i.e., the promotion of some level of unity, co-operation, and improved understanding between different religions or different denominations within a single religion.
- As term for the condition of harmonious co-existence between adherents of different religions or religious denominations.

3 different views:

Exclusivism: *Salvation is ONLY available through Jesus Christ - those who have never heard the gospel are eternally LOST. Salvation is only found through the Christian Church...*

Inclusivism: *While salvation is uniquely found in the person of Christ, its benefits have been made universally available by the revelation of God...*

Pluralism: *Other religions are legitimate means of salvation. People are able to find salvation in various religions and in many ways...*

Or, another way...

- 1) No religion is true.
- 2) Only one religion is true.
- 3) Every religion is true.
- 4) One religion is the true one in whose truth all religions participate.

Some quotes to ponder:

"I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another."

-Gandhi

"The position which I have outlined is exclusivist in the sense that it affirms the unique truth of the revelation in Jesus Christ, but it is not exclusivist in the sense of denying the possibility of the salvation of the non-Christian. It is inclusivist in the sense that it refuses to limit the saving grace of God to the members of the Christian Church, but it rejects the inclusivism which regards the non-Christian religions as vehicles of salvation. It is pluralist in the sense of acknowledging the gracious work of God in the lives of all human beings, but it rejects a pluralism that denies the uniqueness and decisiveness of what God has done in Jesus Christ."

-From Leslie Newbigin's *"The Gospel in a Pluralist Society"*

"When we enter this dialogue with all the cultures of the world...we must be open to conversion – conversion to a fuller truth...If we are not open to conversion, then we have no right to enter into true religious dialogue."

-Vincent Donovan (Catholic Theologian) from *"The Church in the Midst of Creation"*

"The plurality of religious traditions and cultures has come to characterize every part of the world today. But what is pluralism? Here are four points to begin our thinking:

First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettos with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.

Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require Christians and Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and ardent secularists to know anything about one another. Tolerance is too thin a foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another, and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly.

Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments. The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments. It means holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.

Fourth, pluralism is based on dialogue. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the "table" will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table -- with one's commitments."

-Diana L. Eck (Harvard's Pluralism Project)

Some additional resources:

- Plurality 2.0: A blog series I hosted on my blog for a variety of authors to reflect on pluralism and Christianity: <http://pomomusings.com/2009/03/31/plurality-20-guest-blogger-schedule/>
- Pluralism Project (Diana Eck, Harvard): <http://pluralism.org>
- Lots of pluralism resources at Progressive Christianity: <http://progressivechristianity.org/>