

# CHRIST AND PLURALISM

By

Curtis Dickinson

The concept of the equality of all people began with the “renaissance,” came to power in the French Revolution, and became a ready tool for prying apart the framework of Western civilization, which was built on the Biblical truth that there is good and evil, there are good and evil people and that all are now equal but have multifarious talents, abilities and responsibilities.

The pressure to equalize humanity is now being directed to religion, especially to those of the Christian faith, insisting that “the Christian answers on man’s cosmic quality are not the only answers,” and that Christians must be willing to give the same authenticity to Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, etc., as we do to Christ.

Among the arguments of the pluralists are: (1) We are entering a “New Age” of world unity, a “One World” cosmopolitan environment in which an exclusive religion simply will not work: all faiths must work together; (2) The world does not accept claims that Christians have the right faith, and others have a wrong faith. This is arrogance, and has failed to win the world; (3) It is not “Christian” to suggest that because Christ’s claims are true, the claims of others are false; (4) Christ reveals a God who reaches out in compassion to all men, therefore, He would not exclude those who respond to Him according to some other tradition; (5) There are people in other religions who have devout faith, good morals and love for others, therefore, their religion must be accepted on an equal basis with Christianity.

To the pluralist Jesus is an example, a great prophet, a man with special insight into the things of God and therefore a religious leader. A pluralist may call himself a Christian, belong to a church and teach Sunday School class or occupy a pulpit.

But this falls far short of Christian faith, and in fact, denies it. Just the same, more and more people are buying it and dismissing the basic issues of the Gospel with the flippant confession that God loves everyone and all roads lead to heaven.

If Christ was wrong about Himself, then He cannot be trusted regarding anything else. He claimed to be the One foretold by Moses, to whom all should hearken or else be destroyed (Acts 3:22, John 5:46). He claimed that He fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah, and that God had anointed Him and sent Him into the world (Luke 4:18). He claimed to have received exclusive power from God to give life! (John 5:21–23). He stated that no one could come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

If Christ was wrong about any of these claims, then He was a liar and an imposter, and no one should give him any place in religion or in any other realm. One who would make such false claims would be a fool.

There are many other claims that boggled the minds of the disciples. “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,” He said with reference to His own body. “The Son of man must suffer...and be killed, and in three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). The apostles found this prediction so incredible that they were afraid to ask Him about it (Mark 9:32).

But on the third day *He arose*.

This was the *a priori* proof that all His claims were good. Only the creator of life could give life and return from the dead! No question about the rest of His claims!

Wherever the apostles preached, this was their message, that Jesus died and rose again. The Jews, who were devoted to their traditions rather than to God, had nothing with which to refute such a message and it infuriated them until they were willing to go to any unholy extreme to stamp out this sect and silence its preachers.

To recognize that Christ arose from the dead would give authority to everything He claimed. Could this be the reasoning of those who insist that Christ is to be put on the same level with other religious leaders? The New Age is being promoted by a great number of powerful groups and the “one world” community may be a reality of the future, if history continues.

But that involves another one of the exclusive claims of Jesus. He said that history would end with the judgment of all men (which must include Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, etc.) and that He is to be the Judge. Christ does not allow for an ultimate homogenizing of religions, equalizing of all peoples and neutralizing of moral laws. At His coming the world will be divided into two classes: one class to receive the gift of eternal life, and the other to be destroyed.

Only in Christ do we find this finality and exclusiveness. In Japan it is a common thing for people to worship at both the Buddhist and Shinto shrines. Very tolerant gods! Bahaism want to embrace all religions! To modern pluralism, the final judgment and death of all but the saints is shocking and unacceptable.

Does your faith waiver just a bit at this tremendous claim, especially when you realize that only a small minority of all the world’s population are Christians in the Biblical sense? Well, take another look at the proof: Christ did rise from the dead! What can we do with His claims but accept them?

There is no comparison between Christ and any other religious leader.

He is indescribably beautiful in all His actions and attitudes throughout His life on earth.

He is unspeakable majestic in His position today at the Right Hand of God (Rev. 1:12–18). He is utterly powerful, “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3).

He is supernaturally intelligent, knows all our works and thoughts and the intent of our hearts, from all time, to eternity.

He is absolutely holy, perfect and pure in mind, heart and hand.

He is intrinsically good — not relatively good, but absolutely good, a goodness then which there is nothing better.

This is the Christ of the Bible, the resurrected Christ now enthroned in the seat of power over the whole world. “All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

One of the most unbelievable yet compelling claims is the promise to all who fully believe: “and I will raise him up at the last day...”; “and I give unto them eternal life.” John explained what this will mean: “We shall be like Him” (John 6:40, 10:28, I John 3:2).

Many other facts about Christ set Him totally apart from any other religious figure. Christ demonstrated, not only the character of God, but the perfect image of God

— man as He is supposed to be. Believers and unbelievers alike, have acclaimed Him and Him alone as meeting this perfect ideal.

Other religions appeal to man on the grounds that all can be or will be united under their banner. Jesus promised that His followers would be persecuted and opposed by the world, that His doctrine would divide, not unite, and that only a small minority would ever accept Him.

Jesus did not invite men to come to Him and succeed in the world, but to come and die to the world. His own death was not as a martyr, as in the case of many others, but was a planned atonement to fulfill God's purpose. According to Him and His apostles, one is saved from ultimate death ONLY by receiving the benefit of His death, and anyone who seeks salvation in some other way is the same as a "thief and a robber" and will not find it. If Christ is true, other religions are false.

To offer an alternative to false beliefs and dead-end religions is not arrogance, but mercy. Travelers on the broad way will suffer destruction, but those who enter by the narrow gate, the way of Christ will find life.

.....  
Copyright © Curtis Dickinson. Formatted and Posted by Ken Fortier Ministries. Permission is hereby granted by Mrs. Regina Dickinson to reproduce and distribute Curtis' articles to as many as possible. This statement is to remain attached to this article for permission to be valid. Vol. XXV, Number 11.  
.....