

THEOLOGY FACT SHEET

KEY VERSES:

Genesis 1:1	Luke 4:1–13; 20:47	1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16
Proverbs 10:28; 29:1	John 3:36; 5:29; 6:33;	2 Timothy 3:16–17
Ecclesiastes 7:29	14:6	Hebrews 4:12
Matthew 4:1–11; 9:6;	Acts 4:12	1 John 5:12
23:14; 24:46	Colossians 2:9	Revelation 13:3; 14:11
Mark 1:12–13; 12:40		

KEY PUBLICATIONS:

Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society | www.etsjets.org |

KEY FACTS:

Religious Pluralism

- Sixty-four percent of Americans believe, "Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and all others pray to the same God, even though they use different names for that God."¹
- Sixty-four percent of Americans agree with the statement, "All religions are equally good."²
- Sixty-two percent of those surveyed agreed that, "It does not matter what religious faith you follow because all faiths reach similar lessons about life."³
- Fifty percent of all teenagers and 30 percent of born-again teens agree, "It does not matter what religious faith you follow because all faiths teach similar lessons."⁴
- Fifty-five percent of all teenagers and 36 percent of born-again teenagers believe, "Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and all other people pray to the same God, even though they use different names for their God."⁵

KEY QUOTES:

Religious Pluralism

"Even the most tolerant pluralist has difficulties with the aspect of Hinduism which justifies the inequalities of Indian society by its insistence upon a fixed social order, or forcibly burning alive a widow on her late husband's funeral pyre."⁶

"The apostles asserted that Christ alone is the truth in the midst of a world that is more religiously diverse than any we have known in the West until recently."⁷

"'Why should I go to church,' someone once said to me, 'when I have no religious needs?' I had the audacity to reply, 'Because Christianity's true...The needs religion fills are relevant to an assessment of its truth...but were it merely a matter of finding religion to be helpful, then a religious commitment would not be essentially different from a personal preference. We would rightly say that just as some people prefer chocolate to other flavors of ice cream, some people prefer to be Christian than something else or nothing at all merely as a matter of taste. But when something is said to be true, we have a very different situation especially when it is said of a religion. Christian, as well

¹ George Barna, *What Americans Believe*. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1991) pp. 210–12.

² Religion in America, 1996. (Princeton, NJ: The Princeton Religion Research Center, 1996) p. 74.

³ George Barna, *Absolute Confusion*. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994). p. 207.

⁴ George Barna, *Generation Next: What You Should Know About Today's Youth*. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1995), pp. 79, 103.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 76, 103.

⁶ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelism*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), pp. 190.

⁷ David Wells, *No Place for Truth, Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 104.

as other religious claims, are so serious and so demanding personally that adherence to them cannot be properly described as merely a matter of personal taste."⁸

If you had gone to Buddha and asked him, "Are you the son of Bramah?" he would have said, "My son, you are still in the vale of illusion." If you had gone to Socrates and asked, "Are you the son of Zeus?" he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Mohammed and asked, "Are you the son of Allah?" he would first have rent his clothes and then cut your head off. If you had asked Confucius, "Are you Heaven?" I think he would have probably replied, "Remarks which are not in accordance with nature are in bad taste." The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic suffering from that form of delusion which undermines the whole mind of man."⁹

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⁸ Diogenes Allen, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World: The Full Wealth of Conviction*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), p. 1.

⁹ C.S. Lewis, "What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?" *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970). pp. 157–58.

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