



## Truth Verses Tolerance

By

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**WHAT IS TRUTH?**

**IS TRUTH RELATIVE OR ABSOLUTE?**

**IS CHRISTIANITY EXCLUSIVE?**

**ARE CHRISTIANS CLOSE-MINDED?**

**DISCOVER HOW OUR POSTMODERN CULTURE HAS  
REDEFINED WORDS.**

**LEARN HOW THE SUPPORTERS OF THE NEW TOLERANCE  
ARE THE MOST INTOLERANT PEOPLE MAKING TRUTH  
CLAIMS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE.**

## What Is Truth? An Introductory Study

In John 18:38, Pilate asks Jesus a simple yet extremely profound question, “what is truth?” One can almost hear a tone of sarcasm in Pilate’s voice as he utters forth this infamous question. It is almost as if Pilate questions whether or not truth exists. Throughout history many philosophers have offered various perspectives on the nature and knowability of truth. Many in our current postmodern culture question whether absolute truth exists and/or deny that it can be known.

Unfortunately many Christian young people have been spoiled by the culture’s current mantra which alleges that truth is relative to the individual and that absolute truth does not exist. In his book, *The Last Christian Generation*, author Josh McDowell cites the results from a recent survey in which 81% of teenagers said they believe “that all truth is relative to the individual and his/her circumstances.”<sup>1</sup> While most observers of modern culture would not find these statistics surprising, the response offered by churched young people to same question is quite disturbing. McDowell reports that 70% of Christian young people believe that there is no absolute moral truth.<sup>2</sup> In short, our Christian young people, indeed some grace young people, are being adversely affected by the world system. McDowell’s commentary on the situation is both instructive and accurate, when he writes “they (Christian young people) have adopted the view that moral truth is not true for them until they choose to believe it. They believe that the act of believing makes things true. And then, once they believe, those things will be true for them only until they choose to believe something else. As soon as something more appealing comes along among they are likely to begin believing that—whether or not it’s Biblical.”<sup>3</sup>

For those of you who may be tempted to view McDowell’s thoughts as an overstatement, rest assured they are not. As a Christian educator in a public school, my heart has been broken numerous times upon listening to young people who call themselves Christians say things like, “Christianity is true because I believe it is” or “other religion can be true as long as they are sincerely believed.” Grace teens are not immune from this confusion and any thought to the contrary is near-sighted and ought to be guarded against. Just because young people are taught Pauline mid-Acts dispensationalism does not ensure that they are equipped to withstand the unrelenting attack of the adversary upon the notion of absolute truth. In fact, keeping the second or third generation grace believer in the doctrine is a major problem that merits further discussion.

Americans are fickle when it comes to the issue of truth. On the one hand we demand the truth from our spouses, children, bosses, doctors, bankers, stock brokers, lawyers, and politicians. One need only look at the recent public outrage over the bonuses paid to AIG executives or the hatred directed at hedge fund scam artist Bernie Madoff for proof of humanity’s demand to be told the truth. People expect to be told the truth when reading a reference book, pill bottle, road sign, food label, or watching a news story. In fact, Americans demand the truth in every facet of our lives that affects our money, relationships safety, or health.<sup>4</sup>

Why then when it comes to religion and morality all of a sudden truth is relative? Why do people demand the truth in everything but morality and religion? Why does one say, “That’s true for you but not for me,” when discussing morality or religion, when they would never accept such nonsense when talking to their banker about their money market account or a doctor about their health? Most people’s rejection of moral or religious absolutes is volitional rather than intellectual. Consequently, many have swallowed self-defeating truth claims in their attempt to escape being held accountable to any moral standards or religious doctrines.

Simply stated, relativism is the belief that absolute truth does not exist. Relativists will often say things like “there is no such thing as truth.” Statements such as this are self-defeating; that is they fail to meet their own standards. If one says, “there is no such things as absolute truth,” are they not making an absolute statement? In other words, the statement, “there is no such thing as absolute truth,” claims to be absolutely true. Comparatively speaking this like writing, “This sentence is not in English.” Clearly such a statement must be false since it was written in English. The sooner grace believers learn how to recognize self-defeating statements, turn them against our opponents, and teach our young people to follow suit, the more powerful we will be as ambassadors for the message of Grace.

In their book *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek present the following seven truths about truth:

1. Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone’s knowledge of it. (Gravity existed prior to Newton)
2. Truth is transcultural; if something is true, it is true for all people, in all places, at all times. ( $2+2=4$ )
3. Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change. (The earth is round)
4. Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held.
5. Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it.
6. All truths are absolute truths. Even truths that appear relative are really absolute.
7. Truth is that which corresponds to its referent.<sup>5</sup>

On the strength of these seven points, it is easy to see why Geisler and Turek concluded “that contrary **beliefs** are possible, but that contrary **truths** are not possible.” In short, we can **believe** everything is true but we cannot **make** everything true.<sup>6</sup>

In John 17:17, Jesus indirectly answers Pilate’s question about truth. Jesus states, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The bottom line here is that absolute truth does exist and the Bible claims to be the sole source of this truth. In other words, the word of God and the truth are synonymous with each other. Even II Timothy 2:15, a favorite verse of mid-Acts dispensationalists, touches on this important issue. While the entire Bible is true, the portion of the truth which is applicable and in force today can only be discerned through rightly dividing the word of truth. In conclusion, consider the

following statement--while most religions have some beliefs that are true, not all religions' beliefs can be true because they teach opposites. So it is with the word of truth. The word of truth teaches opposites that need to be distinguished and divided from each other in order for the big picture to come into focus. A solid defense of absolute truth is crucial to mid-Acts theology.

## Inadequate Views of Truth Defined and Exposed

In a previous chapter we demonstrated that relativism is self-defeating and that absolute truth does exist. Despite proving that competing beliefs are possible and that competing truths are not possible, the nature of truth itself has yet to be clearly defined.

In philosophy, questions regarding the nature of truth fall under the category known as epistemology. Precisely defined, epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and justification.<sup>7</sup> As such, epistemology endeavors to establish a framework from which one can construct genuine and accurate understanding. In addition, this branch of philosophy entails identifying and developing criteria and methodologies for determining what we know and why we know it.<sup>8</sup> According to John Chaffee, author of *The Philosopher's Way: Thinking Critically About Profound Ideas*, epistemology seeks to answer the following questions:

- Can we ever really know anything?
- How do we know when we don't know anything?
- What is the difference between belief and knowledge?
- Is truth possible?
- Does truth evolve or is it unchanging?
- Can there be different "truths" for different people or is "truth" the same for all?

As one might expect, philosophers throughout history have offered many divergent answers to the questions raised above. Therein lies the conflicting viewpoints regarding the nature and knowability of truth.

As we have already seen, one can **believe** everything is true but one cannot **make** everything true. Tom Morris, author of *Philosophy for Dummies*, observes that human actions are a consequence of our beliefs interacting with our desires. Morris elaborates by presenting the following equation: Beliefs + Desires = Actions.<sup>9</sup> Beliefs are a well spring for action. Therefore, having right beliefs is not just a matter of intellectual importance, but it is of the utmost practical importance.<sup>10</sup> At this point the problem is clear: people hold and operate on the basis of false beliefs. One can sincerely believe and operate their daily life upon the assumption that the Earth is flat, but no matter how sincerely the belief is held, if it does not correspond to reality it is not true.

Clearly, truth must transcend belief. In short, people ought not want their most important beliefs to be mere opinions: real knowledge is what all rational people desire. This of course raises the question of what is knowledge. Professor Morris offers the following definition, Knowledge=Properly Justified True Belief.<sup>11</sup> While belief is necessary for knowledge, belief alone is not sufficient for knowledge. In other words, in order for someone to possess knowledge of anything, their beliefs about the item in question need to be true. For example, one can not know something to be true unless it is. Similarly, one can not know something unless it is **not** false. Got it?

In order for one to possess true knowledge, his beliefs about the idea or item in question must correspond to reality in order to be true and thereby result in real knowledge. All of this proves the necessity of the correspondence view of truth which teaches that truth must correspond to its object. However, truth can be understood both from what it is and what it is not, according to Norman Geisler.<sup>12</sup> Hence before turning our attention to what truth is it is prudent to consider what truth is not.

### Truth Is Not “That Which Works”

Many people believe that truth is found in utility or what works. Philosophically, those who hold this view are known as Pragmatists. Pragmatism asserts that knowledge is a form of practical involvement. In other words, “Knowing is something we do, and is best seen as a practical activity. Questions of meaning and truth are also best understood in this context.”<sup>13</sup> Pragmatist William James summed up his position when he wrote, “truth is the expedient in the way of knowing.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, a statement is known to be true if it brings the right results according to Pragmatism.

Geisler outlines the following inadequacies regarding the pragmatic approach to truth. Pragmatists desire that one accept their view of truth not because it seems to be effective but because it corresponds with the way they believe things actually are.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, one is required to utilize the correspondence view of truth even when asserting that correspondence is incorrect. Does this sound like a self-defeating argument?

### Truth Is Not “That Which Feels Good”

A second commonly held and equally inadequate view of truth is propagated by the Subjectivist. Supporters of this view argue that “truth is what provides a satisfying feeling, while error is what feels bad.”<sup>16</sup> Thus truth is found in our subjective feelings, according to this form of subjectivism. Many involved in New Age Mysticism view truth in this manner.

Like the Pragmatic view, the Subjective view is self-defeating. The statement, “what feels good is true is so only if it corresponds to the way things are,” once again presupposes the accuracy of the correspondence view of truth. In reality, Subjectivism defines truth not by what feels good but if it corresponds to the facts of the matter in question.<sup>17</sup> Second, it is readily apparent that bad news which makes us feel bad can be true. However, if what feels good is always true why don’t my students feel good when they receive poor report cards? How does that old saying go? The truth hurts.

Furthermore, feelings are relative to individuals. Therefore, what feels good to one might not for another. Is truth how one is to account for these subjective differences? If so, then truth would be relative, however, it has already been demonstrated in the previous chapter that relative views of truth are self-defeating. Finally, even if one could equate truth with what feels good, one cannot be convinced that what feels good is necessarily true.<sup>18</sup> “The nature of truth is not the same as the result of truth.”<sup>19</sup>

Pragmatism and Subjectivism are not the only challenges to the correspondence view of truth; however, they are the most prevalent and popular. Therefore, for brevities sake they will be the only ones discussed in this work. For further discussion on what truth is not, the author recommends Chapter Seven of *Systematic Theology Volume One* by Dr. Norman Geisler.

In the next chapter the correspondence view of truth will be considered along with its philosophical and Biblical justifications.

## A Defense of the Correspondence View of Truth

In the preceding chapter we surveyed two of the most prevalent inadequate views of truth, Pragmatism and Skepticism. Rather than focusing on what truth is not, we shall now turn our attention to articulating an adequate view of truth. Simply stated, “truth is telling it like it is.” In other words, truth is that which corresponds to its referent, and therefore, truth is that which represents the way things really are. It does not matter if one is discussing abstract or actual realities, or mathematical, or theoretical ideas, truth is that which accurately expresses its referent.<sup>20</sup> In short, truth is that which correctly depicts that state of affairs whatever they may be.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast, falsehood is that which does not correspond to its object and therefore misrepresents the way things actually are. One’s intentions or beliefs are inconsequential; if a statement lacks proper correspondence, it is false.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, error does not tell it like it is, but like it is not. It is a misrepresentation of the way things are.<sup>23</sup> A host of philosophical and theological arguments exist to substantiate the necessity of the correspondence view of truth.

### Philosophical Arguments for a Correspondence View of Truth

There are many philosophical reasons to accept the veracity of the correspondence view of truth.

First, *noncorrespondence views of truth are self-defeating*. One cannot deny the correspondence view without utilizing it in the attempted denial. For example, the statement, “the noncorrespondence view is true” implies that the noncorrespondence view reflects reality. As a result, noncorrespondence is self-defeating because the view cannot be articulated without utilizing the very correspondence view that it alleges to be false.<sup>24</sup>

Second, *noncorrespondence views of truth make lying impossible*. “If our words do not need to correspond to the facts, then they can never be factually incorrect. Without a correspondence view of truth, there can be no true or false.”<sup>25</sup> This would create the absurd situation where any statement is compatible with any given state of affairs.<sup>26</sup>

Third, *noncorrespondence views of truth lead to the breakdown of factual conversation*. “Factual communication depends on informative statements, but informative statements must be factually true (that is, they must correspond to the facts) in order to inform one correctly.”<sup>27</sup> If facts are not to be used in evaluating a statement, then one hasn’t really said anything. Even literary devices such as metaphors have no real meaning unless one understands that there is a literal meaning with which the figurative is comparable. One who seeks to deny the correspondence view does so at own’s peril.<sup>28</sup> Consider the following example: if one was seeking to board a plane and was informed that the plane had no wings, how long should one wait to see if the statement was in fact true? In the final analysis all communication depends on the correspondence view of truth.



## Biblical Arguments for a Correspondence View of Truth

Theologically, it is paramount for Bible students to recognize the Bible's use of the correspondence view of truth when delivering God's message to humanity.

Consider the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."<sup>29</sup> The veracity of this statement rests upon the correspondence view of truth. According to this verse, "false witness," equals spreading information about one's neighbor that is not correct and thereby does not correspond with the actual state of affairs. Consequently, the Scriptures support the philosophical claim that any denial of the correspondence view makes lying impossible.

John 8:44 identifies Satan a liar and the father of lies. In Genesis 3:4, Satan misrepresents the state of affairs by telling Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," when God actually said certain death would follow from breaking the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.<sup>30</sup> In like manner, Ananias and Sapphira received swift destruction for misrepresenting the facts regarding their financial situation in Acts 5:1-4. The testimony of Scripture is clear; lying is not possible without recognizing the correspondence view of truth.

The Bible also offers numerous other examples of the correspondence view of truth:

- Genesis 42:16—"Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies." By sending one of his brothers home Joseph is testing the veracity of their claim. In other words, Joseph is testing the witness of his brothers to see if corresponds with the way things really are.
- Deuteronomy 18:22—"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.." According to Moses a prophet's authenticity should be judged by whether or not his predictions come true. A message is to be considered false and therefore not from God if events did not proceed as they were predicted or the prophet contradicted or undermined a portion of the Law.<sup>31</sup>
- Psalm 119:163—"I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love." Truth and falsehood was judged based on whether or not it corresponded with God's law.
- Proverbs 14:25—"A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies." This verse teaches that what is factually correct is the truth. "In court, intentions alone will not save innocent lives when they have been accused. Only the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth will do it."<sup>32</sup>

- Ephesians 4:25—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” Paul clearly juxtaposes lying with the truth. Truth equals telling it like it is. Anything less is a lie and therefore devoid of the truth.

As we saw in the first chapter, Jesus asserts in John 17:17, “Sanctify them by your **truth**. Your word **is truth**.” In order for Jesus’s statement to be true and not false, the word of God must be true or Jesus violated the principle of correspondence. Therefore, we concluded that the Scriptures are true and accurately represent mankind’s spiritual state as well as God’s historical, present, and future dealings with mankind. Furthermore, this reality also makes right division of the word of truth paramount. If one fails to recognize the distinctions God has placed within his word one is faced with having to reconcile contradictory statements that seem to undermine the Bible’s claim to be the only source of objective truth about God. As we have already seen a thing cannot be true and not true in the same sense at the same time. Mid-Acts dispensationalists need to press this point home when dealing with our non-Pauline brethren because it is them, not us who make the word of God of no effect through failing to approach God’s word in God’s way.

The correspondence view of truth is the only adequate view of truth and is supported by philosophy and the testimony of both the living and written word.

## Truth Verses Tolerance

Miss California's (Carrie Prajean) recent answer to a question regarding her personal views on same sex marriage has touched off a firestorm of discussion about tolerance in this country. Perez Hilton, and his supporters, have charged Miss California, and all those who share her views regarding marriage with being intolerant. Is it not ironic that those who scream the loudest in the public square about being tolerant are selective in their application of the term? Hilton preaches tolerance with respect to his lifestyle while he demonizes Miss Prajean for not agreeing with him. Who is really being intolerant? Herein lies the dirty little secret of those who advocate for the new tolerance. They are only tolerant as long as one agrees with them; thus, they are hardly tolerant at all.

Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek address the redefining of tolerance in our postmodern culture in their book *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*. They write, "Tolerance, no longer means to put up with something you believe to be false (after all, you don't tolerate things you agree with). Tolerance now means that you're supposed to accept every belief as true."<sup>33</sup> Josh McDowell echoes these sentiments in his work entitled, *The Last Christian Generation*, in which he demonstrates how the current postmodern culture has redefined certain words. McDowell offers the following chart as an illustration.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Your Understanding (Traditional Meaning)</b>	<b>Postmodern Understanding (Youth Culture)</b>
Tolerance	Accepting others without agreeing with or sharing their lifestyle choices.	Accepting that each individual's beliefs, values, lifestyle, and truth claims are equal.
Respect	Giving due consideration to others beliefs and lifestyles without necessary approving them.	Wholeheartedly approving of others' beliefs or lifestyle choices.
Acceptance	Embracing people for who they are, not necessarily for what they say or do.	Endorsing and even praising others for their beliefs and lifestyle choices.
Moral Judgments	Certain things are morally right and wrong as determined by God.	We have no right to judge another person's view or behavior.
Personal Preference	Preferences of color, food, clothing style, hobbies, ect, are personally determined.	Preferences of sexual behaviors, value systems, and beliefs are personally determined.
Personal Rights	Everyone has the right to be treated justly under the law.	Everyone has the right to do what he or she believes is best for him or herself.
Freedom	Being free to do what you know you ought to do.	Being able to do anything you want to do.
Truth	An absolute standard of right and	Whatever is right for you. <sup>34</sup>

wrong.
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These differences in meaning are more than just semantics. Rather, these shifting definitions explain the growing hostility toward the gospel in the marketplace of ideas. Young people evaluate the claims of Christianity through the diction and syntax of their own culture, which has distorted and redefined the meaning of words. Consequently, Christians are increasingly viewed as intolerant and close-minded.

As we have seen in previous chapters, competing beliefs are possible but competing truths are not. One can believe everything is true, but one cannot make everything true. When it comes to religion, most religions have some beliefs that are true. However, not all religious beliefs can be true because they are mutually exclusive and teach opposites.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, some religious beliefs must be wrong. The laws of logic, specifically the laws of excluded middle and noncontradiction lead one to conclude that when two things are different they cannot be the same. Therefore, it is the height of absurdity to teach that all religious roads lead to God when the religions cannot even agree as to the nature and character of God. One should not be so open-minded that they become empty-minded.

#### World Religions: Complementary or Contradictory?

Volumes have been written detailing the divergent teachings of the world's religions. The reality is that the world religions have more contradictory beliefs than complementary ones. The commonly held notion that all religions teach that mankind ought to love one another demonstrates a serious misunderstanding of the religious landscape. It is true that most religions have similar moral codes (best explained by the moral law written on the hearts of men), but the religions disagree on virtually every major doctrine including the nature of God, man, sin, salvation, heaven, hell, and creation.<sup>36</sup> Consider the following major areas of disagreement:

- Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe in different versions of a theistic God, while most Hindus and New Agers believe that everything that exists is part of an impersonal, pantheistic force.
- Many Hindus believe that evil is a complete illusion, while Christians, Muslims, and Jews believe that evil is real.
- Christians believe that people are saved by grace through faith while all other religions if they believe in salvation at all, teach some kind of salvation by good works.<sup>37</sup>

So much for the idea that all religions teach the same thing!

#### The Absurdity of Religious Pluralism

The religious freedom that Americans enjoy demonstrates the necessity of religious tolerance for the orderly functioning of our democracy. However, that is a far cry from

suggesting that we ought to embrace the impossible notion that all religious beliefs are true. Since the various religious worldviews have mutually exclusive truth-claims, only one can be true. A true system of thought must be comprehensive of thought and life. Therefore, it must correspond to reality--past, present, and future, natural and supernatural.<sup>38</sup> Despite these clear contrasts between the teachings of the world's religions the religious pluralists demand that people accept all religious truth claims as being equally valid.

Religious pluralists routinely accuse Christians of being too exclusive, intolerant, and close-minded in their religious outlook. What do the pluralist supporters of the new tolerance mean when making such statements? Simply stated, exclusivism asserts the following with regard to a truth claim, "if one truth proposition is true, all propositions opposed to it must be false. This is based on the logical law of excluded middle. This law states that if A is true than all non-A is false."<sup>39</sup> When applied to religion, exclusivism holds that only one religion can be true, and all others opposed to it must be false.

In contrast, supporters of religious pluralism and the new tolerance will fall into one of the following viewpoints with regard to philosophy of religion: pluralism, relativism, or inclusivism. Please consider the following brief definition of each position:

- Pluralism—is the belief that every religion is true. Each provides a genuine encounter with the ultimate.
- Relativism—is similar to pluralism, claiming that each religion is true to the one holding it. There is no objective truth in religion, so there are no criteria by which to determine which is best.
- Inclusivism—claims that one religion is explicitly true, and all others are implicitly true.<sup>40</sup>

As we have already seen, religious pluralism is absurd based on the law of noncontradiction. Similarly, religious relativism will not hold water because relativism is self-defeating (see posting entitled What is Truth An Introductory Study). Therefore, the intellectually honest reader is forced to concur with Scripture that there is only one pathway to God and consequently, only one right religion.

### Defense of Biblical Exclusivism

Philosophically, religious exclusivism is the only position that makes sense. Therefore, it should not be surprising to the Bible believer that Scriptures assert and support an exclusivist view. Consider the following verses:

- John 14:6-- Jesus saith unto him, I am **the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto **the Father, but by me**.

- I Timothy 2:5-- For there is **one God, and one** mediator between **God and men,** the **man Christ Jesus**;

Could there be two more exclusive statements than the ones quoted above? The testimony of the Scriptures is clear: Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. It is only by placing saving faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that mankind can be saved from sin and its penalty. True Biblical Christianity is an exclusive religion.

Rather than fleeing in intellectual embarrassment from this conclusion, believers need to embrace the soundness of their position and understand that it is the religious pluralists who are operating contrary to reason. First, “if holding an exclusivist view makes one intolerant, then pluralists are also intolerant, for they claim their view is true to the exclusion of opposing views (like exclusivism); they certainly would not tolerate the position that their pluralistic view and the nonpluralist views were both true.”<sup>41</sup> Second, the statement, “you ought not to question someone’s religious beliefs” is itself a religious belief for pluralists. Stated another way, pluralists think that all non-pluralists beliefs are wrong. Therefore, pluralists are just as dogmatic and close-minded as anyone making truth claims in the court of public opinion.<sup>42</sup> Finally, the entire notion of tolerance implies the existence of a real disagreement. People do not tolerate that which they agree with. Rather they embrace it. Consequently, the concept of tolerance presupposes a nonpluralist view of truth.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the charge of intolerance, pluralists also accuse Christians of being narrow minded or intellectual imperialists. The allegation of narrow mindedness is laughable at best. Both pluralists (P) and exclusivists (E) make an equal claim to truth and error in that both claim that their view is true and whatever is opposed to it is false. Consider the following logical statements, If E is true, then all non-E is false. Similarly, if P is true, then all non-P is false. An evaluation of the facts demonstrates that charge of narrow mindedness is a hollow one because pluralists are just as narrow-minded as any exclusivist.<sup>44</sup>

The charge of intellectual imperialism stems from the notion that Christians only utilize the Bible as a source of truth and ought to be open to input from more than just one source. By calling exclusivists totalitarian, the pluralist is utilizing an *ad hominem* technique which attacks the person holding a particular position rather than answering the position in question. Moreover, the basis for this attack is unjustified because it assumes that truth should be more democratic, while in reality truth does not hinge on the number of inputs but correspondence with reality. Lastly, Pluralists do not really believe that all views are equally true or good or they would have no basis to argue that Nazism was a bad form of governance and American representative democracy is good.<sup>45</sup>

Paradoxically, pluralist advocates of the new tolerance are not really tolerant at all. They only tolerate those who already agree with them, which is not tolerance by anyone’s definition. Furthermore, “are pluralist ready to accept as truth the religious beliefs of Muslim terrorists—especially when those beliefs say that all non-Muslims (including

pluralists) should be killed?”<sup>46</sup> In the final analysis, pluralists’ really do not believe in pluralism.

### Conclusion

There is a big difference between being open minded and empty minded. Believers should be open minded in the sense that we recognize that while the Christian system is a system of truth we all hold some individual beliefs that may not be correct according to God’s Word. In this sense we all continue to need instruction from God’s word rightly divided to help correct the errors and road blocks in our own understanding. However, it is quite a different thing to be open minded to the point of embracing every wind of doctrine as valid. The only system of truth is the Christian system when the word is rightly divided. All non-Christian religions and denominational systems are systems of error with some truths.

Grace believers are a unique breed. Not only are we at odds with the world system, but we fight against a religious system that does not want the truth we are offering. Despite these challenges we need to acknowledge who we are and stand for it. We are exclusivists, who operate in the traditional definition of tolerance and are open minded enough that when we see truth we can embrace it and apply it to the details of our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation* (Holiday, FL: Green Key Book, 2006), 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek. *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> John Chaffe, *The Philosopher’s Way: Thinking Critically About Profound Ideas* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005), 415.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>9</sup> Ron Morris, *Philosophy for Dummies* (New York, NY: Wiley Publishing, 1999), 43.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>12</sup> Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology Volume One* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 110.

<sup>13</sup> Bryan Magee, *The Story of Philosophy: The Essential Guide to the History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: DK Publishing, 1998), 183.

<sup>14</sup> Geisler, *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 110.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 742.

<sup>21</sup> Geisler, *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.

<sup>22</sup> Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.

<sup>23</sup> Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

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- <sup>25</sup> Norman L. Geisler, and Ron Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook of Christian Evidences*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books, 1990), 263.
- <sup>26</sup> Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.
- <sup>27</sup> Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.
- <sup>28</sup> Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.
- <sup>29</sup> Exodus 20:16
- <sup>30</sup> Genesis 2:17
- <sup>31</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1-4
- <sup>32</sup> Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.
- <sup>33</sup> Geisler and Frank Turek. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, 46.
- <sup>34</sup> McDowell. *The Last Christian Generation*, 22-23.
- <sup>35</sup> David Horton. *The Portable Seminary*. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2006), 420-421.
- <sup>36</sup> McDowell., 46.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 46.
- <sup>38</sup> Horton. *The Portable Seminary*. 425-426.
- <sup>39</sup> Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.*, 238.
- <sup>40</sup> Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. 238.
- <sup>41</sup> Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 132.
- <sup>42</sup> Geisler. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, 47.
- <sup>43</sup> Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 132.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 132.
- <sup>45</sup> Geisler. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, 48.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 48.