

The one way to address the divisiveness of religion that does work!

Strategy: The Gospel alone empowers you to live lives of reconciliation and peace.

1. The origin of Jesus' salvation.

Vs. 2: "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God ..."

Meaning? Jesus is God as well as a man.

In Jesus Christ, ultimate reality has become visible. When ultimate reality is visible, you see a man on the cross loving people who don't love him, forgiving people who are abusing him, sacrificially serving people who oppose him. When the early Christians took that into the very heart of their life, it became their ultimate reality.

2. The purpose of Jesus' salvation.

vs. 2 "... Jesus Christ has come in the flesh ..."

Meaning? At the birth of Jesus, God received a body.

At the resurrection of Jesus, we see the salvation of God is not to escape the flesh but redeem it, not to escape this world but redeem and renew this physical world.

3. The method of grace

vs. 10 "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

Meaning? Jesus is a Savior

He lives the life we should have lived and dies the death we should have died and pays the penalty for sin, so non-loving, non-virtuous, non-performers of the truth can be saved by radical grace.

Dan Wilvers- July 16thth 2017 Part 1



How can you claim your religion is the only true religion?

1 John 4:1-10

¹Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

This is the Word of the Lord

2 ways people address the divisiveness of religion

"... do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."
1 John 4:1

Strategy #1-They are hoping to weaken religion's influence.

The Premise for this ideology: As human beings became more and more technologically advanced the need for religion would diminish.

The problem with this premise:

In the last century:

Africa has gone from 9% to 50% Christian

Korea has gone from 1% to 50% Christian

China and South America Christianity is seeing similar growth.

The answer:

The main point is that religious impulse is not just an intellectual thing. The need for something to worship (spirituality, religion) is an indelible, unavoidable part of human nature. It won't go away simply because we think it should.

John Stott wrote a commentary on 1 John 4, he says,
"You mustn't make the mistake to think religious diversity and religious views are merely intellectual or cognitive phenomena like political views. There is actually a transcendent spiritual realm that people desire to connect to. Every human will worship something.

"They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them."
1 John 4:5

Strategy # 2- They're hoping to confine religion to a private realm.

The Premise for this ideology: "Go ahead. Have your religion, but let's keep it in the private realm. Then we can all live together." Therefore we ought to agree on two things.

1. All religions are equally valid paths to God.

The problem with this premise:

They have a faith position too, even as they are criticizing ours. When they say *that*, "*All religions are equally valid paths to God.*" They are saying each religion only has a piece of truth not all of it.

The answer:

The only way you could know religions only see part of the truth is if you assume you have the whole truth, which is the very thing you say nobody has!

2. Religion is to give you strength in your private life, but never bring it out into public discourse.

The problem with this premise:

Why are we here? What is right and wrong for human beings to be doing? What's wrong with the human race, and what will fix it? How do we decide right and wrong? Nobody can operate in life without a set of answers to those questions. Yet those answers can't be proven in a lab.

The answer:

Whatever your answer is to those questions, it's a faith assumption. In short it's a religious belief. You may not see it as a religious belief, but it is.