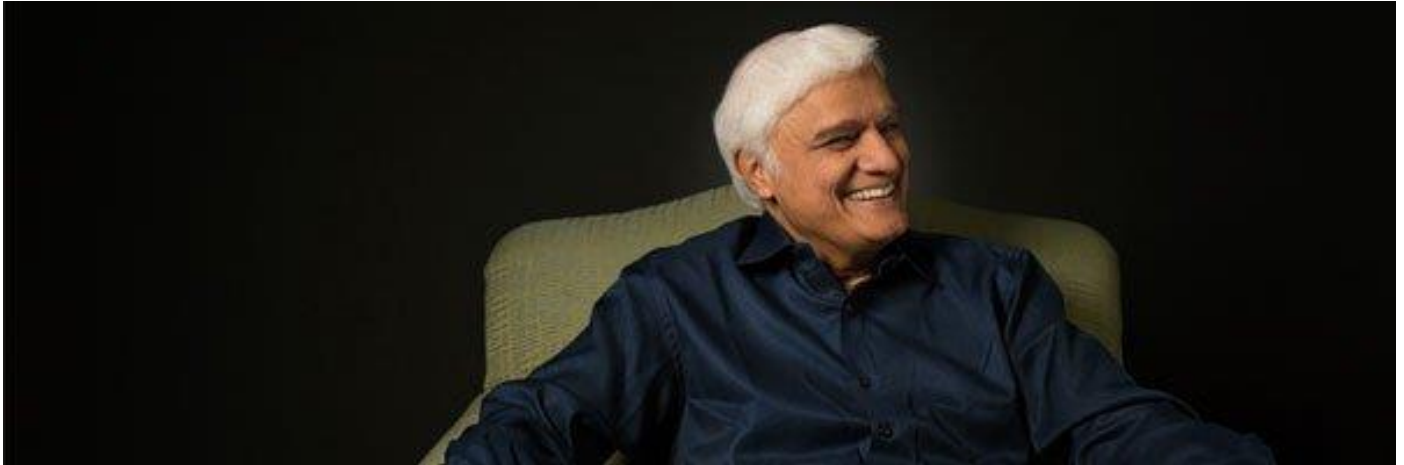


# Think Again: A Kaleidoscope of Colors

Posted by [Ravi Zacharias](#) on May 25, 2017 in [Just Thinking Magazine](#)

[\*More articles from Just Thinking 25.3\*](#)



When our son was only four years old and we moved to a different city, he raised a question that brought rounds of laughter from the whole family, and even prompted a wistful thought. Driving in the car one day, right out of the blue he turned to my wife (who is from Canada) and said, “Mummy, when do we turn black?” Caught completely off guard she said, “I don’t know what you mean.” “Well,” sounded the pensive, albeit innocent, childish voice, “You are white, we are beige, and Daddy is brown – when do we turn black?”

How nice it would be if life did provide such a sequence of colors! In his young mind, magnificently untainted by years of biases and indoctrinations, he saw life as a time-released kaleidoscope of colors and apparently envisioned the possibility of each of us experiencing the joys and hurts of all. How much more understanding of each other we would be if each of us could live for a time within another’s world and be subsumed in someone else’s life story?

The multiplicity of ethnicities offers many delights – how intriguing are the various cuisines, traditions, art, accents and literature of our world. In the West, globalization has brought the riches of pluralism to our neighborhoods and iPhones. As one speaker I heard once quipped, where else but in Los Angeles (or I might add, Toronto or London) would you find a fast food stand where a Korean is selling kosher tacos?

Yet with pluralism has come pluralization, the phenomenon or process by which all ideas and worldviews have become accepted as equally valid and true. Naturalism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam: choose whatever you wish as all narratives lead to the same conclusion and essentially teach the same things. That’s what is implied. But do they?

I was recently asked by a student from Nepal studying in an American university, “Why Christianity?” With the numerous religions in the world, what’s so distinct about Christianity? I have been asked this question countless times around the globe – and I am fascinated by the fact that the Christian faith is the only one that’s ever raised.

Answering a question such as that demands a serious sensitivity. You see, religious pluralism is a belief system that sounds good but does disservice to all religions. All religions are exclusive. That is a fact. If they weren't, they would not be making any truth claims. Indeed, it is the very nature of truth that presents us with this reality. *Truth by definition is exclusive.* Every proposition and assertion in contradictory worldviews cannot be true. If every assertion and claim were true, then there would really be no distinctive claim, in effect making all religions equally true or false. Truth has two edges to its claims. One cannot claim mutually exclusive beliefs.

The reality is that even those who deny truth's exclusivity, in effect, exclude those who do not deny it. The truth quickly emerges. The law of non-contradiction does apply to reality: Two contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense. Thus, to deny the law of non-contradiction is to affirm it at the same time. You may as well talk about a one-ended stick as talk about truth being all-inclusive.

Furthermore, every religion has its starting points and its deductions, and those starting points exclude counter-perspectives. For example, Hinduism has two non-negotiable beliefs: karma and reincarnation. No Hindu will trade these away. In Buddhism, there is the denial of the essential notion of the self. Buddhists believe that the self as we understand it does not exist, and our ceasing to desire will result in the end of all suffering. If we deny these premises, we devalue Buddhism.

Islam believes that Mohammad is the last and final prophet, and the Quran is the perfect revelation. If we deny those two premises, we have denied Islam. Even naturalism, which poses as irreligion, is exclusive. Naturalism teaches that anything supernatural or metaphysical is outside the realm of evidence and purely an opinion, not a matter of fact.

In the Christian faith, we believe Jesus is the consummate expression of God in the person of his Son and is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. We cannot deny these premises and continue to be Christians.

All religions are not the same. All religions do not point to God. All religions do not say that all religions are the same. At the heart of every religion is an uncompromising commitment to a particular way of defining who God is or is not and accordingly, of defining life's purpose.

And so, the question is not, "Which of these religions is all encompassing?" Rather, "Which one of these will we deny as being reasonable and consistent?" "Which one of these will we be able to sustain by argument and by evidence?" We can have pluralism in cuisine, clothing styles, accents, and a kaleidoscope of other things. But if pluralism means ideational relativism and the destruction of the law of non-contradiction, it is incoherent and ultimately unlivable.

I think, for instance, of one of my closest Hindu friends who struggled for years with whether the teachings of his religion were truly livable, particularly the doctrine of karma. He was sitting in my living room when he spoke out aloud. He asked himself: "If every birth is a rebirth, and every birth is the consequence of previous karmic practices, what was I paying for in my first birth? I cannot have an infinite series of rebirths or I would not be in this birth. Therefore I must have had a first birth. What was I paying for then?"

I just stared at him and said, "You have to answer that question."

He said it simply did not make sense. He had to have a first birth and ever since then was in karmic deficit. He said, “If I go to the bank, every bank manager will tell me what my indebtedness is and how long I have to pay it off. What sort of system is life itself where I have no clue about what I owe and how many births it will take for me to pay it back?”

Those unanswerable questions sent him on his pursuit of truth and finally finding grace and forgiveness in Jesus.

Likewise, part of my response to the Nepalese student who asked me about Christianity was to share with him that only in Jesus do you find the answers to the deepest questions of the soul, answers that correspond to reality and in totality are systemically coherent. Indeed, only Jesus describes our condition, provides for our malady, explains suffering, offers his life as an atoning sacrifice, and rose again from the dead to give eternal life to all who would believe. The gospel is the only story where grace and forgiveness are central and unearned – and that is good news to all people everywhere, whatever color or ethnicity.

That’s why Jesus made the astounding statement, “They that are on the side of truth listen to me” (John 18:37). All religions may have hints of truth and aspects of goodness. But only in Jesus Christ do we see the consummate expression of the true, the good, and the beautiful. In him was the embodiment of grace and truth. The disciples rightly said to him, “To whom shall we go? For you have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

He tasted death for all of us whatever our race or creed. He is the giver of life to all who come to Him. Heaven is the ultimate equalizer and the place of perpetual novelty.

*Warm Regards,*

*Ravi*



Ravi Zacharias is Founder and President of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries ([RZIM](#)). Zacharias has spoken all over the world for 45 years in scores of universities, notably Harvard, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, and Cambridge.