

Inclusivism

Christ Will Save Most of the Unevangelized

Session 4

Outline

- I. Inclusivism Defined
- II. Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism
 - A. Part 1: Universal Access
 - B. Part 2: Salvation for the Unevangelized
 - C. Part 3: Optimism
- III. Assessment
 - A. Part 1: Universal Access
 - B. Part 2: Salvation for the Unevangelized
 - C. Part 3: Optimism
- IV. Conclusion

Outline

I. Inclusivism Defined

Inclusivism Defined

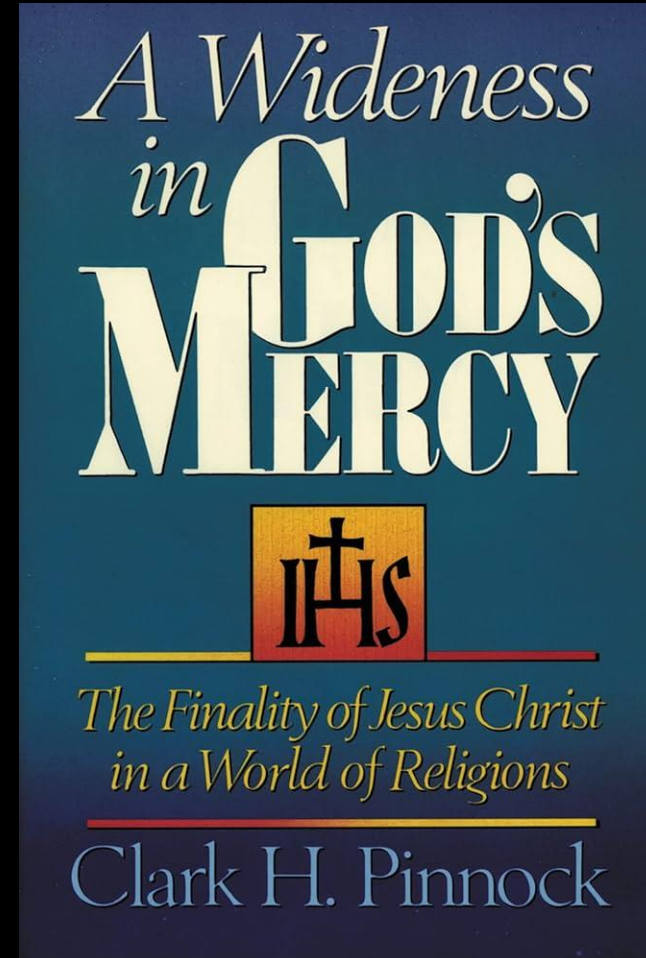
- Salvation is only available through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Anyone can benefit from this salvation by responding positively to whatever revelation God has given them. For some, this revelation includes hearing the gospel, but for others it does not.
- The majority of people, but not all, will find salvation.

Outline

I. Inclusivism Defined

II. Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism

Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism



Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism

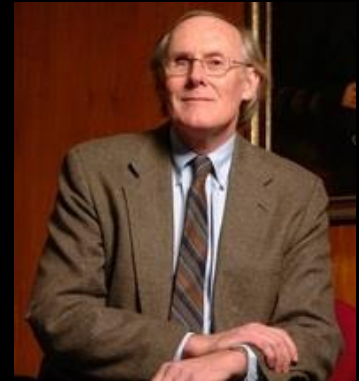
- Part 1: God's universal salvific will entails universal access to salvation
- Part 2: People can be saved without having heard the gospel
- Part 3: Large multitudes of the unevangelized will be saved

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 1

God's universal salvific will entails universal
access to salvation

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 1

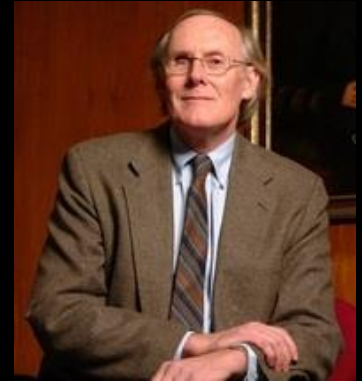
“Who or what is God and what does he want or intend? Is he the kind of God who would be capable of sitting by while large numbers perish, or the kind to seek them out patiently and tirelessly? Does God take pleasure and actually get glory from the damnation of sinners as some traditions maintain, or is God appalled and saddened by this prospect? ... The issue is summed up for me by what the apostle Peter says: “[God] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pe 3:9).”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 1

“[The unevangelized] cannot lack the opportunity merely because someone failed to bring the Gospel of Christ to them. God’s universal salvific will implies the equally universal accessibility of salvation for all people.”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

People can be saved outside the preaching of the
gospel

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

Righteous people that did not hear the Gospel:

- Abel
- Enoch
- Noah
- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph
- Moses
- David
- Etc.

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

Righteous people that did not hear the Gospel:

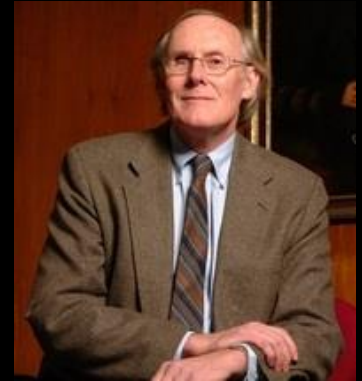
- Abel
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- Noah
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- Moses
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- Etc.

“Holy Pagans”

- Job
- Melchizedek
- Abimelech, king of Gerar
- Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and priest of Midian
- Balaam, a pagan soothsayer
- The queen of Sheba (Queen of the South)
- Cornelius

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

“In my judgment, the **faith principle** is the basis of universal accessibility. According to the Bible, people are saved by faith, not by the content of their theology. Since God has not left anyone without witness, people are judged on the basis of the light they have received and how they have responded to that light. Faith in God is what saves, not possessing certain minimum information.”



Clark Pinnock

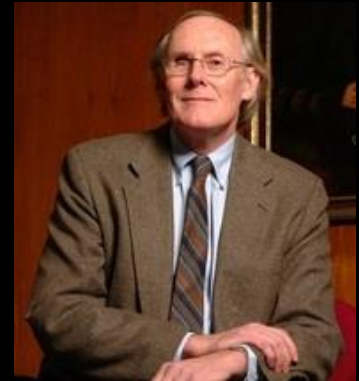
Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

“Why would it make any difference if Job were born in A.D. 1900 in outer Mongolia? Why would God not deal with him the same way he dealt with him in the Old Testament? A person who is informationally premessianic, whether living in ancient or modern times, is in exactly the same spiritual situation. The same things apply to all such: “God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.” [Romans 2:6-7].”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 2

Summary of parts 1 and 2:

- Salvation is universally accessible.
- The basis of salvation in every age is the death of Christ.
- The requirement for salvation in every age is faith.
- The object of faith in every age is God.
- The exact content of faith changes as people receive more revelation.

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Large multitudes of the unevangelized will be saved

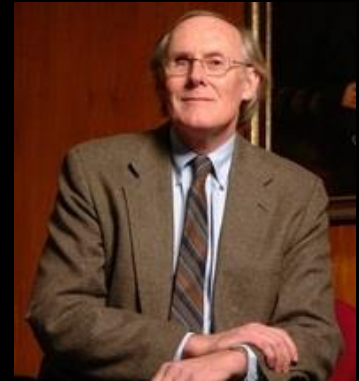
Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“All are God’s peoples. We can speak of a covenant of creation such that the whole world and its peoples belong to God who created humanity to relate to him. God made us for himself, to do us good and not to destroy us... Any attempt to present God’s saving plan on a small scale is on the wrong track and misses the point of early Genesis.”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“The call of Abram implements the promise to Noah. Both covenants are universal in scope. For a reader not to see this suggests a hermeneutical presupposition blocking truth out. Others do not miss the obvious point.”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity
- God is at work in the nations

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“Are you not like the Cushites to me,
O people of Israel?” declares the LORD.
“Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians
from Kir?

Amos 5:7

Among those who know me I mention Rahab and
Babylon;
behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush.

Psalms 87:4ab

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

⁸ God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.

⁹ The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!

Psalm 47:8-9

For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:11

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it.

Jeremiah 18:7-8

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity
- God is at work in the nations
- In the end, the nations will gather under God

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

²⁴ In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, ²⁵ whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance."

Isaiah 19:24-25

Nations will fear the name of the LORD,
and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.

...when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

Psalms 102:15, 22

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all
the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 25:6-8

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“What a perfect expression of the wideness in God’s mercy!... The protolog of early Genesis agrees with the eschatology of the prophets and psalmists in stimulating hope in us for the substantial redemption of the world.”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity
- God is at work in the nations
- In the end, the nations will gather under God

Optimism in the New Testament

- God accepts people from every nation

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,
³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and
does what is right is acceptable to him.”

Acts 10:34b-35

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity
- God is at work in the nations
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Optimism in the New Testament

- God accepts people from every nation
- Jesus redemptive work is universal

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

- God is interested in saving all of humanity
- God is at work in the nations
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Optimism in the New Testament

- God accepts people from every nation
- Jesus redemptive work is universal
- Jesus is the savior of all people

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

Romans 5:18

¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

1 Timothy 4:10

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

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Optimism in the New Testament

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- Jesus is the savior of all people
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Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Revelation 21:5a

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into [the New Jerusalem]

Revelation 21:24

...through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:2

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

Optimism in the Old Testament

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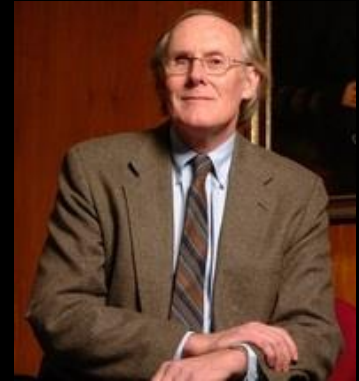
Optimism in the New Testament

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God is at work in all parts of life, including other religions

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“God calls on all persons to seek him, whether they seek him from within religion or outside it. There is enough truth in most religions for people to take hold of and put their trust in God’s mercy.”



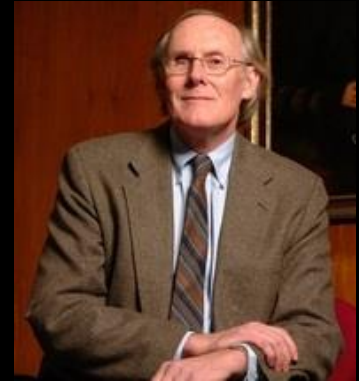
Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

What about missions?

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

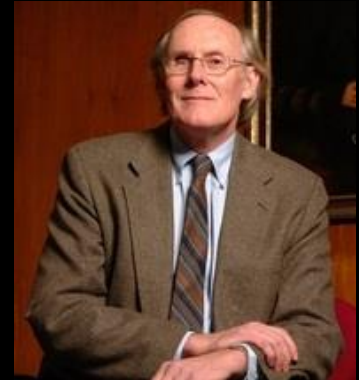
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Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism, Part 3

“Missions are part of God’s strategy for transforming the world and changing history. One goal of missions is quantitative, to baptize and form congregations. The other goal is qualitative, to change life’s atmosphere, to infect people with hope, love and responsibility for the world.”



Clark Pinnock

Pinnock's Inclusivism - Summary

God wants everyone to be saved, is actively at work in all the nations, and Christ is the savior of all people.

We should have hope that the majority of people will be saved.

Those who have never heard of Christ are saved through their response to whatever revelation God has given them.

God is at work in every aspect of people's lives, including other religions. Members of other religions may be saved by Christ depending on their response to whatever parts of those religions are true revelations from God.

Comprehension Questions

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Assessment, Part 1

God's universal salvific will entails universal
access to salvation

Assessment, Part 1

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17

Assessment, Part 1

“...desires **all** people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

1 Timothy 2:4

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should reach repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

Assessment, Part 2

People can be saved outside the preaching of the
gospel

Assessment, Part 2

- The Patriarchs, other OT saints, and “holy pagans” are clear examples.

Assessment, Part 2

- The Patriarchs, other OT saints, and “holy pagans” are clear examples.
- Saved by explicit faith in God as they knew Him.

“And [Abraham] believed the LORD,
and he counted it to him as righteousness.”

Genesis 15:6

Assessment, Part 2

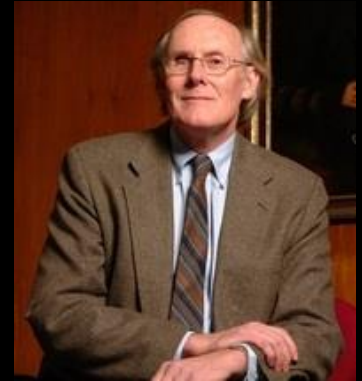
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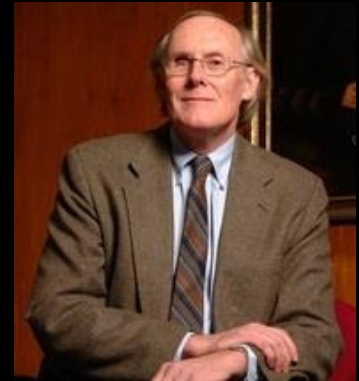
“... people are saved by faith, not by the content of their theology... Faith in God is what saves, not possessing certain minimum information.”



Clark Pinnock

Assessment, Part 2

“There is enough truth in most religions for people to take hold of and put their trust in God’s mercy.”



Clark Pinnock

Assessment, Part 2

“Evangelicals typically argue that two things are required for saving faith: (1) Faith must be directed toward the right object, and (2) the proper object of faith must be approached with certain subjective attitudes, including sincerity and genuine commitment. Many church members can recite a set of creedal statements without exhibiting the slightest degree of sorrow over their sins or personal commitment to Jesus Christ...



Ronald Nash

Assessment, Part 2

...Such people embrace the objective component of faith right, but fall short on the subjective commitment. Pinnock seems to be saying that if people have the subjective side of faith right (sincerity, perhaps, or intensity or a truly seeking attitude), it is irrelevant that those subjective attitudes turn out to be directed toward a false god.”



Ronald Nash

Assessment, Part 2

- The Patriarchs, other OT saints, and “holy pagans” are clear examples.
- Saved by explicit faith in God as they knew Him.
- A geographical change, rather than chronological.
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Assessment, Part 3

Large multitudes of the unevangelized will be saved

Assessment, Part 3

- The Biblical Data
 - Scripture speaks of the reach of the Gospel, not it's success.

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 - Scripture speaks of the reach of the Gospel, not it's success.
 - The nations may be saved by the Gospel.

Assessment, Part 3

“For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 1:11

Assessment, Part 3

- The Biblical Data
 - Scripture speaks of the reach of the Gospel, not it's success.
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 - The New Testament is pessimistic about the number of the saved.

Assessment, Part 3

²² [Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³ And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, ²⁴ “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Luke 13:22-24

Assessment, Part 3

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Matthew 7:13-14

Assessment, Part 3

⁹... all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;
¹¹ no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

Romans 3:9b-11

Assessment, Part 3

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 - Non-Sequitur: Few Are Saved vs. God's Universal Salvific Will

Assessment, Part 3

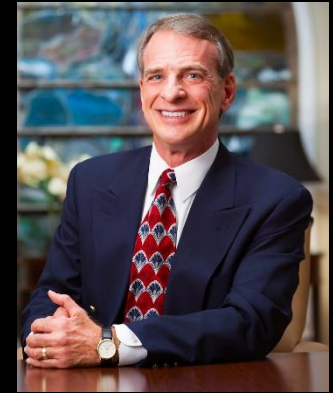
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- Undermines Missions

Assessment, Part 3

“Pinnock realized that his view raises an obvious question: doesn’t this undermine both the rationale and the urgency of the task of world mission? Doesn’t this undercut the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to every creature regarding both its rationale and urgency? He says no, it does not, and he gives three reasons in defense:



William Lane
Craig

Assessment, Part 3

Pinnock: God has called us to engage in mission work, and we should obey.

Craig: That doesn't provide any rationale for why God should issue such a pointless command. It just amounts to blind obedience to a command for which there is no rationale. Why would God command that, when these people are already saved?



William Lane
Craig

Assessment, Part 3

Pinnock: Missions is broader than just securing people's eternal destiny.

Craig: In other words, we are back to the Christian Peace Corps again, all the social improvements a mission can bring. While that certainly is a part of sharing the Gospel, that doesn't provide any rationale for sharing the Good News of salvation through Christ as opposed to just social improvement.

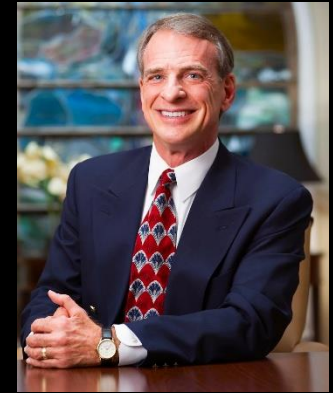


William Lane
Craig

Assessment, Part 3

Pinnock: Missions should be positive. It is not an ultimatum, “Believe or be damned!”

Craig: Well, of course, it has got to be positive; but nevertheless it is really hard to understand, on Pinnock’s view, what urgency there is to the task of world evangelization, since these people are already saved.”



William Lane
Craig

Assessment, Part 3

“The principal problem is will, not ignorance. Consequently, the true purpose of missions is ‘stimulating the hearers to action,’ not just imparting new information. Evangelism is important because it challenges people to respond to the gospel.”



John Sanders

Assessment, Part 3

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- Undermines Missions
- General Revelation discounts most religions and their adherents.

Assessment, Part 3

Knowledge from General Revelation

- There is a God.
- He created the world.
- He has great majesty.
- He is kind and loving.
- God is a living being like us, not one made of metal or stone.
- He is eternal.
- He is powerful.

Assessment, Part 3

Knowledge from General Revelation

- He possesses those properties normally associated with deity.
- And the recognition that certain sins deserve God's judgement.
- There is a moral law to which people are held accountable.
- People fail to live up to it. They break the moral law.
- People know their sins are wrong.
- God has a just wrath against wickedness.

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Assessment, Part 3

“There are people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it. For example, a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy and to leave in the background (though he might still say he believed) the Buddhist teaching on certain other points.”



C.S. Lewis

Assessment, Part 3

“Far from being a preparatory stage in the human quest for God, these religions represent a descent from the truth and are ‘evidence of man’s deepest corruption’.”



Douglas Moo

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Conclusion

- OT saints were saved by their response to whatever revelation they did have.
- That revelation did not include the Gospel.
- Saved by Christ, though they did not know Christ.
- Examples of this are extremely rare.
- Scripture is optimistic about the reach of the Gospel, but pessimistic about its success.
- Non-Christian religions lead people away from Christ and salvation.

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Next Week

Restrictivism and Narrow Particularism
Accessibilism
A Discussion

Questions