

## Interfaith and Pluralism

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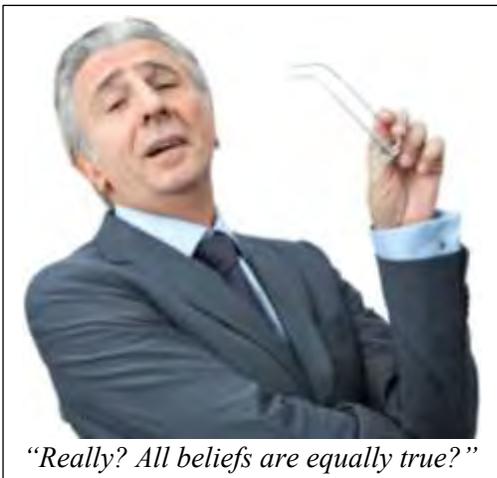


The concept or doctrine of pluralism lies at the avant garde of establishment, interfaith work. One of the very best known multi-religious, and religious understanding initiatives on earth is Harvard Professor, Diana Eck's The Pluralism Project at Harvard University. Professor Eck's list of donors is a true who's who of money and status seeking a better world of greater understanding.

The concept or doctrine of pluralism also is one of the main dimensions of interfaith where extra-religious ideologies and commitments begin to manifest, it is the place where "politics" begins to appear, and where "liberals" and "conservatives" must work out and bring into harmony their passions and convictions. The question of pluralism is the place where "liberals" and "conservatives" who both believe either in the ideal or the necessity of interfaith meet each

other. Here we start to see interfaith activists often become possessed by the very attitudes and behaviors they presume themselves to be a cure for. Were this not tragic, and in fact harmful, it would be comical.

The self-imagined, enlightened interfaith leader championing the embrace of all, suddenly becomes the very individual full of condescension, disregard, and dismissal of others, those who do not think like themselves. This always happens when philosophical and ideological commitments become coupled with the belief that what I do is for the sake of good. This combination becomes an invitation to bias, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness. How ironic. "I hate those Neanderthals who are not enlightened like me, and don't realize that all religious beliefs are equally true."



*"Really? All beliefs are equally true?"*

"Yes, all religious beliefs are equally true. Except those beliefs I, the great, enlightened embracer of all don't like. The beliefs I don't like are not equally true, and people who hold those beliefs are not acceptable. The main untrue religious belief is the belief that "my religion is true." How backward."

This great and important challenge of pluralism, which is a necessary and vital component of interfaith work requires humility, finesse, and persistent self breakdown and repair under heaven's labors. The only way to work legitimately in the field of interfaith, and religion and peace is to find that delicate way of being, in which our own political leanings and biases do not contaminate the higher purposes our interfaith efforts seek to realize.