

IS CHRISTIANITY ALONE FULLY TRUE AND IS JESUS CHRIST REALLY THE ONLY WAY TO GOD?—Part 2

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Intuitive Religion Among the Famous and Not So Famous

In the world today there are only a dozen major religions. But there are literally thousands of minor religions—and thousands of different gods. Back when the Westminster Confession of Faith was written, it declared that the chief end of man was to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. At that time, few Westerners had any real doubts as to which God was referred to. Today it is a different story.

So is it possible to discover which concept of God is true and which religion is true? Let's begin by finding out what we can know at the intuitive level.

There is a particular fact that no one, not even the most diehard atheist, can logically deny. The vast majority of men and women in history have believed in God. At best, atheism is little more than an infected blemish on the face of history. In fact, it is probably true the majority of the greatest thinkers among humanity, scientists included, have believed in God.⁸ If many of the *greatest* intellects of history have believed in God, then it seems a bit presumptuous for more garden-variety intellects to claim “absolute” assurance there is no God.⁹ While this does not prove the Christian view of God, it does say a great deal about *all* skeptical views which characteristically reject theism and supernaturalism. And at this point, a pound of truth outweighs a ton of presumption.

In *God And...*, a disillusioned Catholic priest—Terrance A. Sweeney, president of Jesuit Media Associates in Los Angeles—set out to try and recover his faith. He interviewed 30 famous people, asking each of them three questions, “Who is God to you?” “Who are you to God?” and “How has your relationship changed?”¹⁰

This book illustrates the truth that virtually everybody believes in God at some level, regardless of what they may claim. The famous depth psychologist Carl Jung once stated that the “idea of an all-powerful divine being is present everywhere, if not consciously recognized, then unconsciously accepted.... Therefore I consider it wiser to recognize the idea of God consciously; otherwise something else becomes god, as a rule something quite inappropriate and stupid.”¹¹

Even if skeptics and others say they aren't certain or that they disbelieve in God, they still know He exists. In the material below we have provided sufficient examples to illustrate our point. Collectively they show the raw power of the intuitive knowledge of God, even when such knowledge is perverted into mysticism and pantheism. Famous writer Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., who describes himself as a rationalist, still believes in God. Even though he judges God's performance as “quite heartless,” declaring we have “a lousy God,” he nevertheless says that he believes in “pretty much the Unitarian God, where spring is celebrated and where there is a feeling of something terribly important going on in the universe, something unified, an awareness of that” (pp. 86-87). Actor Richard Chamberlain declares, “We are pieces of God” (p. 200). Star Trek producer Gene Roddenberry says, “As nearly as I can concentrate on the question today, I believe I am God; certainly you are; I think we

intelligent beings on this planet are all a piece of God, are becoming God” (p. 11). Actor Martin Sheen replies in response to whether or not he prays at all, “Only when I get in trouble.” Asked where he directs the prayer he says, “It just...goes. I feel like I’m making contact. I don’t feel that I’m talking to myself when I pray. I don’t think people who pray do, do they? If they’re really praying, they are in touch with Another, which I think is God, or part of God, or at least the presence of God in us” (p. 23).

Noted movie director Frank Capra makes the following astute observation:

As I got into the creative business, then I realized that creativity and God were connected, directly connected. Whether you believe in God or not. You had to believe, if you believed in creativity, you had to believe in some creator. And if you believed in some creator, where do you end up? You must go to that prime creator,... which has set our universe in motion. Things are too ordered in the universe to be the result of chaos.... there is no way you can get away from the fact that there’s got to be some sort of divine idea to the whole thing. (p. 34)

When asked how that divine idea relates to Capra, he replied, “In a sense, there is divinity in all life, in all matter; and so I’m certainly a piece of God, a very small, ugly piece of God, but I’m a piece of God. I know when I’m compassionate, and I know when I’m a mean stinker. So that I place value judgments on my own behavior. I know good from evil, and I know right from wrong. Now, who gives me that? Where did I get this feeling of right from wrong? So there must be some divinity within me” (p. 35).

Even novelist and screen play writer of *Exorcist* fame, William Peter Blatty speaks of his relationship with God in quite personal terms:

It’s very mysterious that one man, being of sound mind, can give his life for another. I think that kind of love, that kind of inherent goodness speaks very loudly for a good God.... And so with all the problems, I personally have always felt that my relationship to God is that of a son who writes lots of letters. He never gets a letter back, but he keeps hearing reports from mutual friends of what his father is doing. And his father seems to be taking the attitude of “look, trust me, I’m taking care of you.” And I do trust him, I trust God very definitely. There have been so many personal interventions in my life (p. 45).

Frank Sullivan, Emeritus Professor and Thomas Moore Scholar at Loyola Marymount University stated what most people already know:

To me, proving the existence of God is not important because everybody believes in God no matter what they say.... When you look back over your life, carefully, you remember all kinds of moments when you felt God near you; when you felt that somehow or other you lucked out; when you got something you didn’t deserve. (pp. 126-27)

William Shoemaker, one of the greatest jockeys in the history of racing, confessed:

I must admit that I’m really not very religious. I do believe in God, but I don’t really follow it as well as I probably should. I’m not into it like some people, but I believe in God and sometimes in my life I have asked him to help me when I thought I really needed it. That’s happened to me many times, and I think he’s helped me. I think he’s been great to me. God’s been good to me in my career.... I feel like he’s trying to look out for me, you know, maybe more so than the average guy. (p. 150)

On the half hour serial, *Photo Play* for October 18, 1986, actress Morgan Brittany was interviewed. We think her story could be multiplied many times in the lives of everyone, believer and unbeliever alike. It illustrates that because God is a good and loving God, the

goodness of God is bestowed upon all men and women, irrespective of their beliefs and final destiny. Apart from faith in Christ, this goodness is not the goodness of salvation but it is true goodness, mercy, compassion, and lovingkindness nonetheless. God helps all of us through the difficult times of life knowing full well that many of us won't even give Him so much as a "thanks" in return. Jesus told His followers to love their enemies and do good to them because God "Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Lk. 6:35).

Of course, some do give thanks. In Morgan Brittany's case, she was a child star from age 5 to her early teenage years. Then, without warning, her career ended. As she put it, she was not "cute" like a child anymore, and not yet mature enough to be an actress. Her pampered world now collapsed around her. She eventually entered a prolonged suicidal depression where she questioned the value of living. Finally, it became so difficult she cried out to God to *somehow* help her. She told Him, in essence, "I just won't make it if you don't help me, *now*. I cannot last one more day." She prayed and prayed that God would help her; He absolutely *had* to help her. And, as she went on with the story, she noted, "And He did. I woke up the next morning as a new person. I had a new sense of direction, purpose and excitement about life. I *knew* things would work out." She acknowledged publicly that it *was* God who had saved her. She had prayed to God and He had answered her prayer, no question about it.

In an interview, former President George Bush recalled his being shot down over the Pacific during World War II, "I was a 20-year old kid; the other two men in the plane were dead, and flames all over us. Of course, I cried out to God to save me. I remember floating in that rubber raft in the middle of the ocean...and yet, a feeling that God was going to help somehow and that I was going to live."¹²

That God is good to all men is indeed the scriptural testimony. God desires that "none should perish" and that men should "love life and see good days" (1 Peter 3:10). God "gives to all men generously and without reproach" (James 1:5). In all past generations, God "did good [to you] and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). "I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and to do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God" (Ecc. 3:12-13). Truly, "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (Psalm 33:5).

Even in spite of the evil* in the world, Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "All I have seen

*Whenever there are problems or tragedies in life and God is not "kind and good," so to speak, when we see famines or natural disasters, we should never suspect God's goodness (See John Wenham, *The Goodness of God*). These things usually result from a fallen natural order, our sin, or the folly of men, not from God. Either the greed and stupidity of men cause calamities such as famines in Communist and socialist regimes, or the evil done by dictators, drug runners, etc., destroys thousands or millions of lives. Sometimes evil reaches such proportions God *is* literally forced by His own righteousness to send judgment in various forms through weather calamities, economic hardships, etc. Of course, natural and social disasters are not always the direct judgment of God, but if God did not uphold His own holiness and punish evil, things would be far worse than they are. As it is, God is much more merciful and longsuffering than we deserve and far more merciful and longsuffering to evil men than most of us would be. Further, the Bible tells us all men intuitively know God is good despite the evil in the world (e.g., Rom 1:18-21; 2:14-16; 3:4-6). If God were *truly* evil, the conditions of life and our sense of things would be quite different. This is why we never ask, "Why is there so much good in the world?" It's always, "Why is there so much evil in the world?" We know that evil is the aberration in a universe whose Ruler is good and righteous. (And in fact, the evil that exists is not as prevalent as suggested by our instantaneous, worldwide media reporting and, regardless, it could be much worse were it not for God's restraining hand (2 Thess. 2:6-7) and His common grace.)

teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen” and Walt Whitman commented, “To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle. Every cubic inch of space is a miracle.”¹³ As Lewis Thomas once wrote about the fertilized egg:

The mere existence of that cell, should be one of the greatest astonishments of the earth. People ought to be walking around all day, all through their waking hours, calling to each other in endless wonderment, talking of nothing except that cell.... If anyone does succeed in explaining it, within my lifetime, I will charter a skywriting airplane, maybe a whole fleet of them and send them aloft to write one great exclamation point after another, around the whole sky, until all my money runs out.^{13a}

This sense of wonder and the miraculous, in even ordinary things, also underscores that the intuitive knowledge of God is “everywhere.” Personal statements such as those cited above are repeated in various ways and forms throughout Sweeney’s book—and could, certainly, be repeated five billion more times were we to interview everyone in the world. They clearly illustrate the truth of Romans chapters 1 and 2 which declare that everyone intuitively *knows* God exists, everyone has a conscience, and everyone knows they are personally accountable to a divine Being. For example, in its own pagan way, the following Chinese belief in accountability is seen in every religion and culture in one manner or another: “A very old idea in Chinese philosophy holds that there are spirits, in both microcosm and macrocosm, that record one’s good and bad deeds.”¹⁴ Because the sense of responsibility to a higher power exists universally, at some level and in some way, all men expect a future judgment. That is one reason the fear of death is also universal.

As far as we know, with the exception of George Bush, none of the statements in Sweeney’s book or by the others were made by genuine Christians. When non-Christians, secular or religious, make statements about God that have varying degrees of truth in them, this certainly says something about what people know intuitively. But an interesting point is that even though people know that God has been good to them, they usually ignore Him. They know God exists (Rom. 1:20), they “believe” in God, they realize God has been good to them—and yet they live their lives basically as if God *doesn’t* exist! Their “belief” in God is intuitive and self-serving, not genuine and biblical. As the famous philosopher Mortimer Adler recalled prior to his own conversion to Christianity, “I simply did not *wish* to exercise a will to believe.”¹⁵ Famous novelist Aldous Huxley wrote frankly that, “Most ignorance is vincible ignorance. We don’t know because we don’t *want* to know. It is our will that decides how and upon what subjects we shall use our intelligence.”^{15a}

Notes:

8. See, e.g., Henry Morris, *Men of Science: Men of Faith?* (Santee, CA: Creation-Life 1990). See note 9.
9. E.g., Roy Abraham Varghese, *The Intellectuals Speak Out About God* (Dallas: Lewis & Stanley, 1984); Kelly James Clark (ed.), *Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of Eleven Leading Thinkers* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993). Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese, eds., *Cosmos, Bios, Theos: Scientists Reflect on Science, God and the Origin of the Universe, Life and Homo Sapiens* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1992).
10. Terrance A. Sweeney, *God And...* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press 1985).
11. Carl Jung (H.G. and C. F. Baynes, translators), *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology* (NY: Dodd Mead, 1928), 73 cited in Rollo May, *The Art of Counseling* (NY: Abingdon,

- 1967), 217.
12. Interview by Doug Wead, "George Bush: Where Does He Stand?", *Christian Herald*, June 1986, 14.
 13. Quotations from the 1987 "Rainbow" calendar, (Allen, TX: Argus Communications), Product #14850.
 - 13a. Lewis Thomas, *The Medusa and the Snail*, (NY: Viking Press, 1979), 155-57.
 14. Taoist priest and scholar Kenneth Cohen, "Chi, the Breath of Life" *Yoga Journal*, March/April, 1986, 37.
 15. Adler, in Kelly James Clark (ed.), *Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of Eleven Leading Thinkers* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 209, emphasis added.
 - 15a. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, (London: Chatto & Windus 1946), 270, emphasis added.