

Aren't they all basically the same?

I was eating breakfast at a hotel in Riga, Latvia. I was there to speak to leaders and at a citywide outreach event. There on a TV suspended from the ceiling was MTV blasting away. Because of technology and mobility our world is now a global village.

You can be living in a small town in North America and see Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists working together and living next door to one another. Since many of them are citizens with the same rights of those born in the country, it's easy to think that the various religions they follow are pretty much the same as well. You could just assume that they're just different ways of understanding the same God. This opinion is definitely "politically correct" in our tolerant society. Plus most religions have a lot of moral and ethical values in common. Even significant thinkers throughout history have held to this common sense view. Mahatma Gandhi said, "The soul of religion is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms." As appealing as this way of thinking might sound, it won't work.

But just ask the actual followers within these different faiths if all religions aren't basically the same. They will all give you a definite 'no.' Just look at the different ways people worship. Have you noticed how many religions have absolutely opposing views of what God is really like?

The most significant difference of all is how and if we can make ourselves acceptable to God. Almost all religions stress that by keeping their teachings a person will be fulfilled or reborn. With many religions this involves a form of karma ('cause & effect', paying off your sin or guilt). But this is miles apart from the grace (forgiveness without cost when you don't deserve it) of Christianity. The Bible teaches that no one is capable of saving themselves or making themselves acceptable to God. However, the God of Christianity is personal and because of His awesome love for humanity, He longs to have a relationship with us and made this possible through the shed blood of Jesus on the Cross.

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