

***Reformed Institute Videos for Adult Education:
The Challenges and Opportunities of Religious Pluralism***

***Religious Pluralism and Public Life:
A Reformed Response to the New Situation
R. Bruce Douglass***



Religious pluralism is nothing new in the U.S., but the way in which we tend to think about religious pluralism today is new. There is a growing view that it is no longer enough for us just to tolerate religious differences, we need also to aim for equality of treatment among religions so that none of them, including the religion of the majority, is privileged. This view is controversial among many white Protestants who have assumed their particular brand of Christianity has a privileged role to play in the U.S. But there are a good many other white Protestants—including those in Reformed and other mainline churches—who are more open to the changes. The purpose of this presentation is to address the rationale for this new view in a manner that is in keeping with (if not always informed by) the Reformed tradition.

***Theologies of Religious Pluralism:
A Reformed Critique and Alternative
Larry Golemon***



This session explores how theologians from a variety of traditions characterize the relationship between Christianity and other world religions, including Judaism, Islam, and Dharmic traditions from the East. The positions are: exclusivism, where Christianity is treated as the only true path; inclusivism, where God's grace works in other faiths, but all will culminate in Christ; and pluralism, where Christianity is treated as one among many paths to religious truth. I also explore Reformed thinkers who take up these views and I offer my own Reformed critique. In the end I offer an alternative view that takes the faith claims of other religions seriously because of the accommodation and concreteness of revelation, God's work through Word and Spirit, God's justice and providence, and an openness to God's final purposes.

***Reformed Theology's Reasons for (and Hesitation about)
Engaging in Interreligious Dialogue
Matthew D. Taylor***



Distinctive Reformed theological emphases—the sovereignty and providence of God, predestination, the supreme revelation of God in Christ, etc.—have been points of pride for Reformed Protestants, but such emphases can also be barriers to interreligious dialogue. If God is sovereign and chooses whom God will save, why should Christians go out of their way to get to know people of other faiths other than to preach the Gospel to them? If (Reformed) Christians have the Truth with a capital T revealed in Jesus, what do they have to learn from other religions? In this presentation I would like to suggest that a robust theology of the sovereignty and providence of God should provoke us to curiosity about what it is that God is doing in other religions that make up the majority of humanity.

***The Promise and Pitfalls of Living Religious Pluralism:
A Congregation's Story
David Gray***



Many Reformed congregations are engaging with an increasingly diverse society by establishing relationships with people of other faiths in new ways. Interfaith couples increasingly come to pastors for counseling. Many churches are partnering with other religious communities in building-sharing arrangements. PCUSA churches are increasingly engaged in “pulpit swaps” and joint education programs with other faith leaders, and they are exploring joint mission projects. What are the pastoral, personal, prophetic and practical implications of all this? The purpose of this presentation is to examine these issues in the light of one congregation's experience in trying to create a house of worship that is shared by three different faith communities, who also engage in ongoing dialogue about various projects that are designed to promote interfaith witness.

Religious Pluralism with a Human Face
John Lee



Religious pluralism can be considered abstractly, but often one engages “religious pluralism” concretely in conversation with someone of a different religious tradition. This someone can be your next door neighbor, a coworker, a fellow parent from your child’s soccer team, and so on. Occasionally some of these conversations go beyond the ordinary to touch upon more personal topics like family hopes and challenges, personal aspirations, and one’s religious commitments. Is there a Reformed perspective on conversing with a neighbor who is of a different religious tradition? This talk will answer this question from a *gospel centered Reformed perspective*. If the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is good news, how does this inform our conversations with others who have not meaningfully encountered this Good News?

***Religious Pluralism and the Proclamation of the Gospel:
 Reflections on the Bible and the Reformed Tradition***
Quinn Fox



American Presbyterians live in the most religiously diverse society ever known. “Interfaith relations” can overwhelm us as we encounter growing numbers of people who belong to other religious traditions or to no tradition at all. What is the appropriate way to respond to this state of affairs? In our Presbyterian polity the first of the “Great Ends of the Church” is “the proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of Humankind.” What does this mean in a time of ever-expanding religious pluralism? Does the Bible offer us examples, or guidance for dealing with the challenges we face as we interact with friends, neighbors and perhaps even enemies who embrace other faiths? And what guidance does the PCUSA Book of Order and the Book of Confessions offer?

Each video is from 30-40 minutes in length, allowing for discussion to follow. These videos and questions for discussion are available without cost to Reformed Institute member churches. Other interested churches are asked to make a donation to the RI (recommended \$10 per video). Contact Yvonne McKinney ymckinney@reformedinstitute.org or Larry Golemon 703-232-5303 to arrange access or for further information.