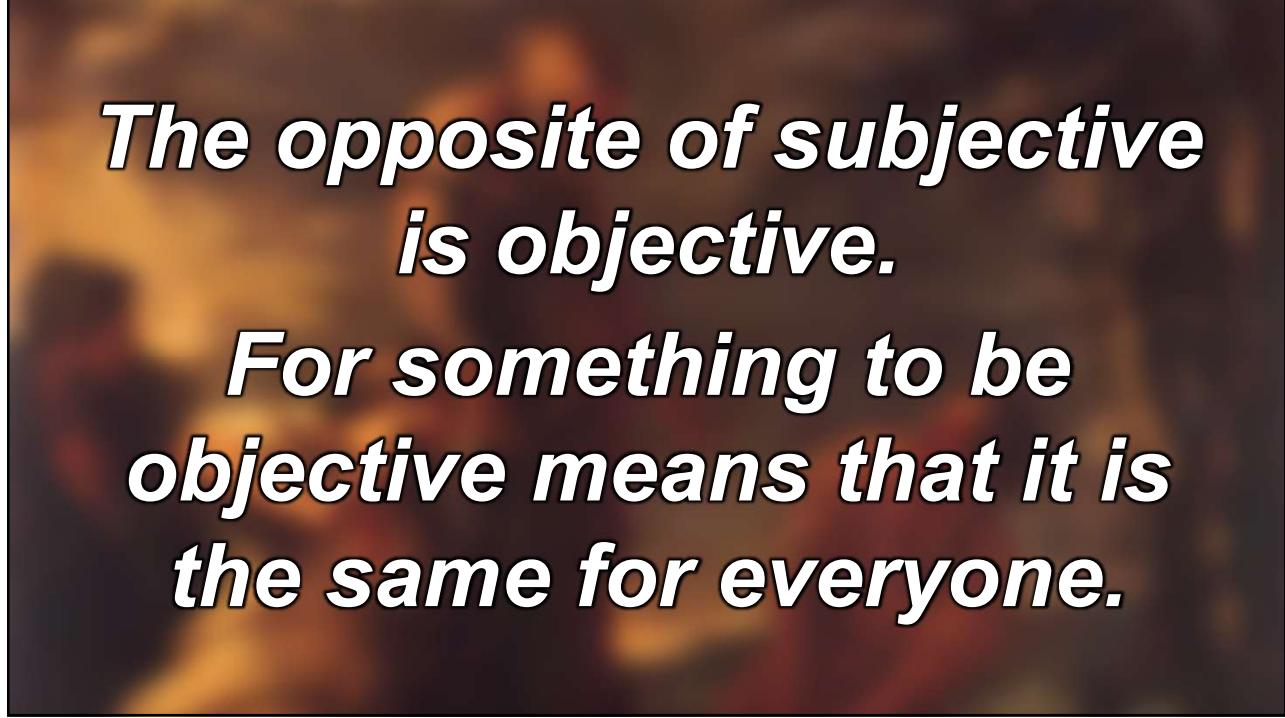


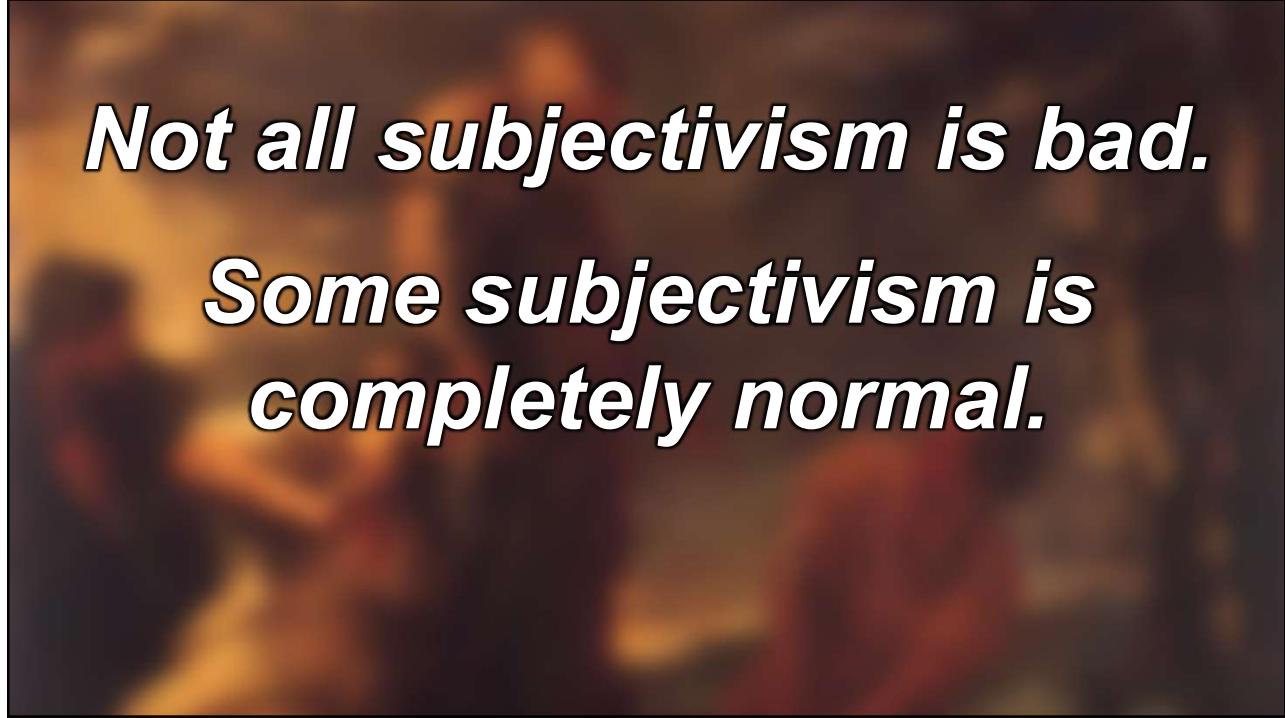
***Relativism about "X" means that "X" or our knowledge of "X" is different for (i.e., relative to) different people.***

***Another word for 'relative' or 'relativism' one might hear is 'subjective' or 'subjectivism'.***



***The opposite of subjective  
is objective.***

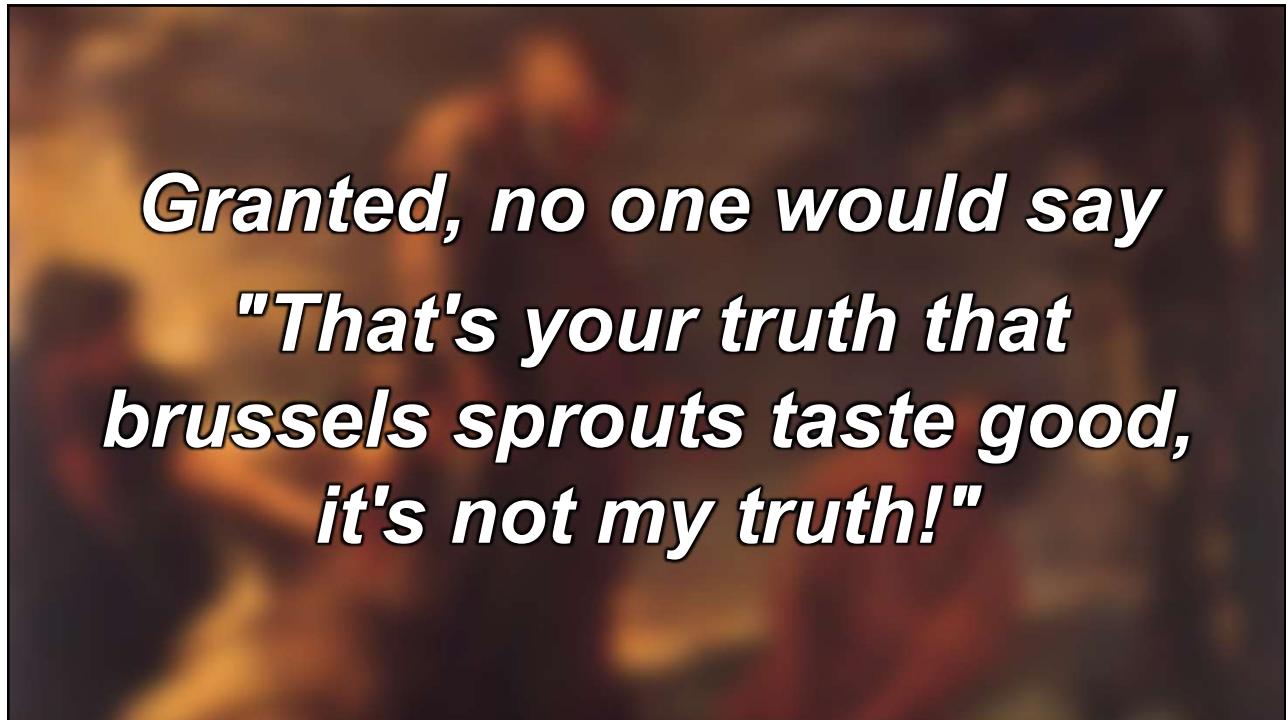
***For something to be  
objective means that it is  
the same for everyone.***

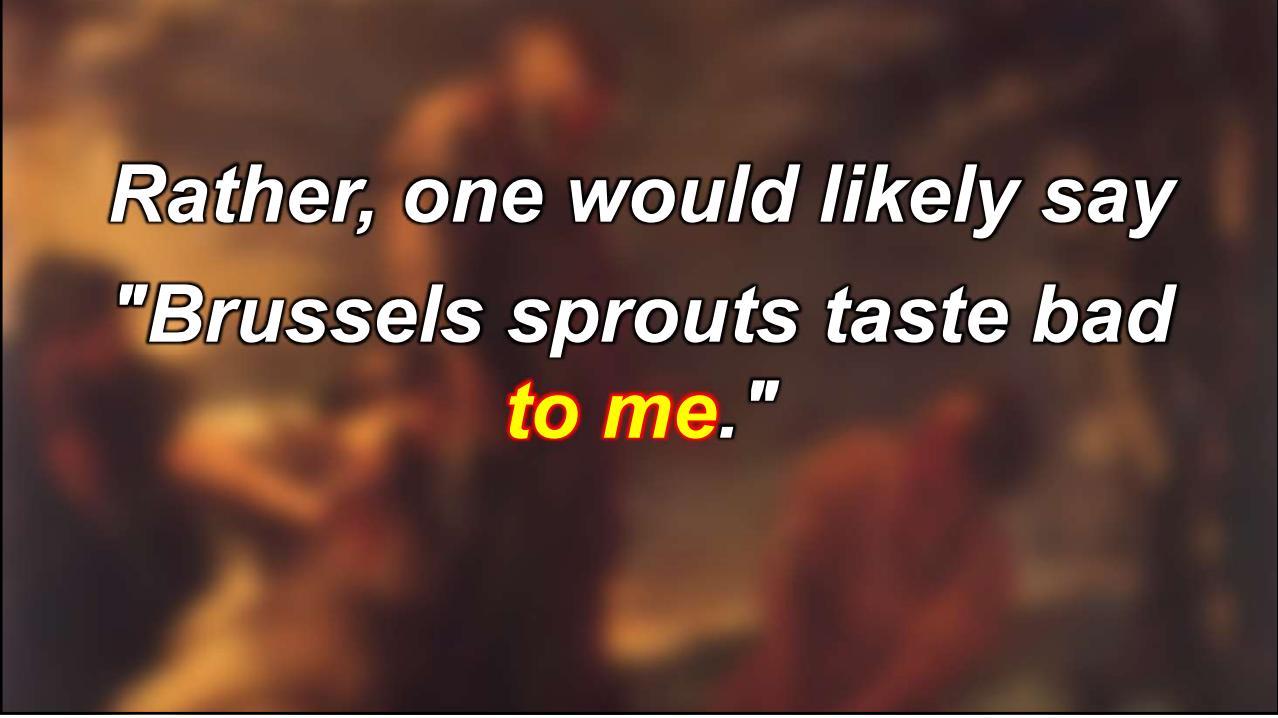


***Not all subjectivism is bad.***

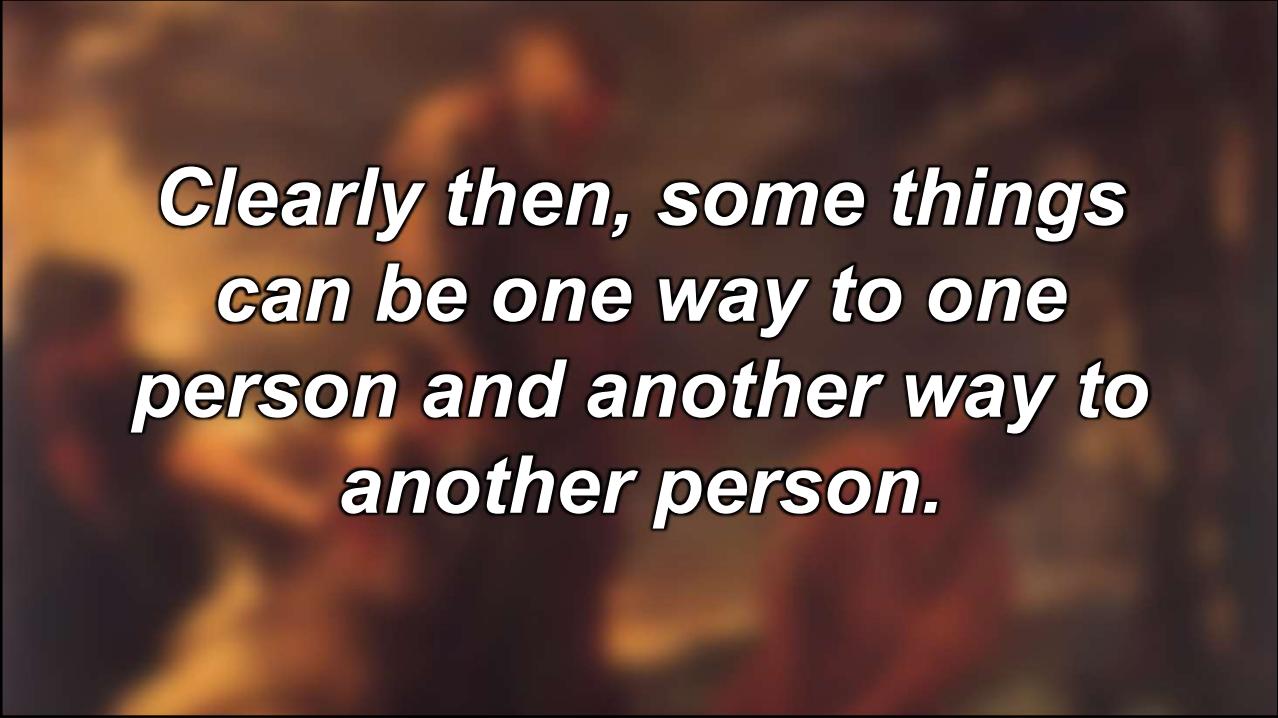
***Some subjectivism is  
completely normal.***







*Rather, one would likely say  
"Brussels sprouts taste bad  
to me."*



*Clearly then, some things  
can be one way to one  
person and another way to  
another person.*

*But what about those  
instances where  
"That's your truth,  
not my truth"  
is wrong?*

*Exactly what  
makes  
it wrong?*

# Subjective Truth

vs.

# Objective Truth

## Subjective Truth

when something can  
**legitimately** be true for  
one person and not true  
for another

## Objective Truth

when something cannot  
**legitimately** be true for  
one person and not true  
for another

**Subjective** = The truth or falsity of a claim is with reference to the subject. It is dependent upon the subject's circumstances or opinion.

**Objective** = The truth or falsity of a claim is with reference to the object. It is not dependent upon the subject's circumstances or opinion.

**Truth**

*Asparagus is tasty!* = Subjective

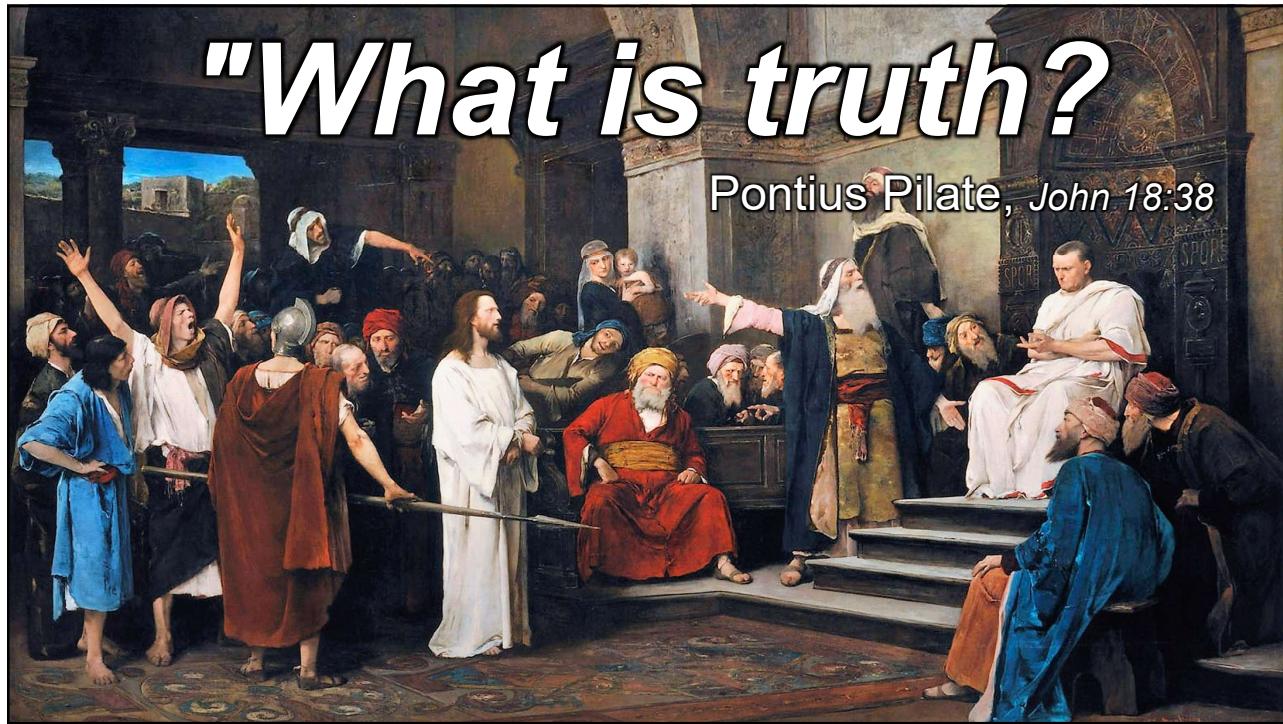
*Asparagus is a vegetable.* = Objective

**Subjective** = The truth or falsity of a claim is with reference to the subject. It is dependent upon the subject's circumstances or opinion.

**Objective** = The truth or falsity of a claim is with reference to the object. It is not dependent upon the subject's circumstances or opinion.

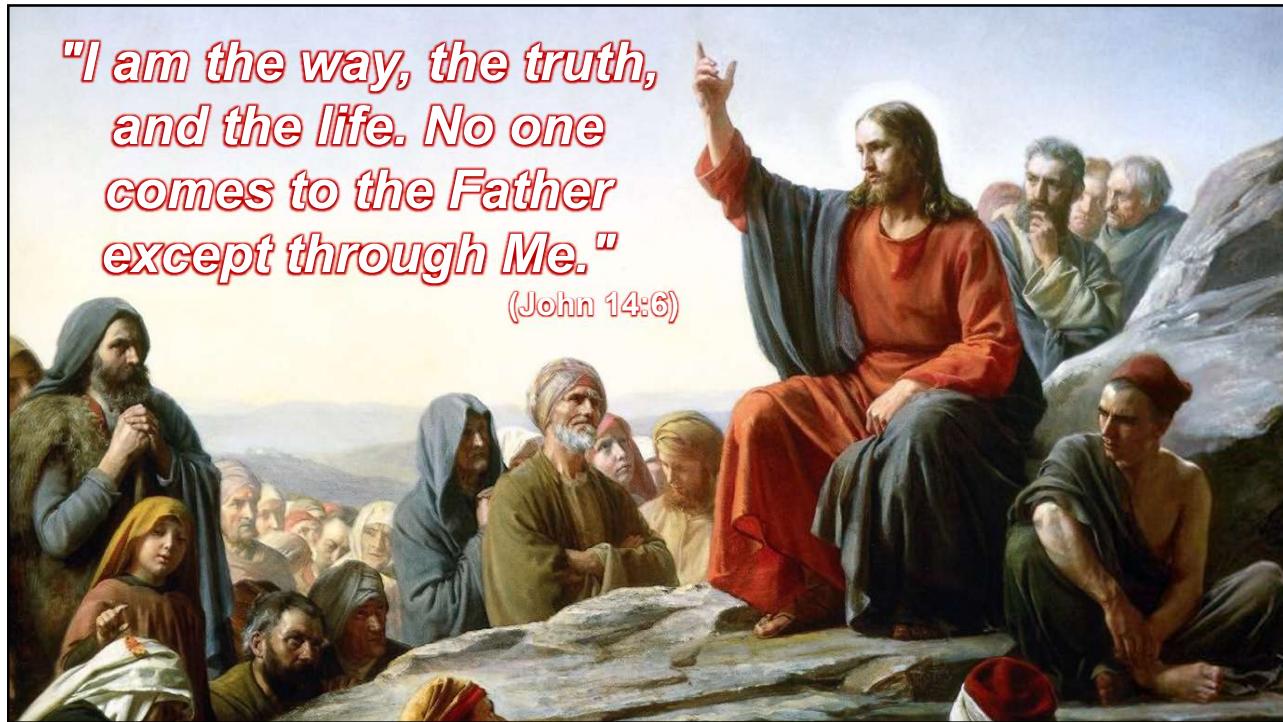
**Truth**

**Truth**



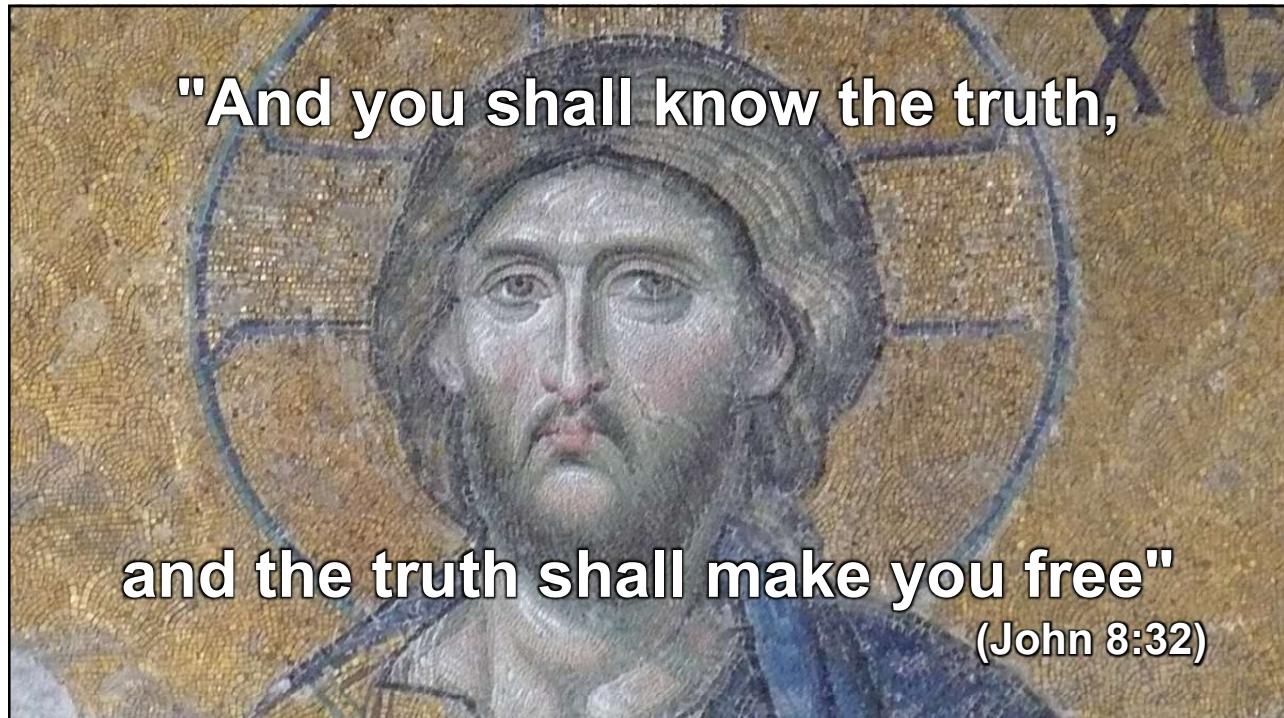
# "What is truth?

Pontius Pilate, John 18:38



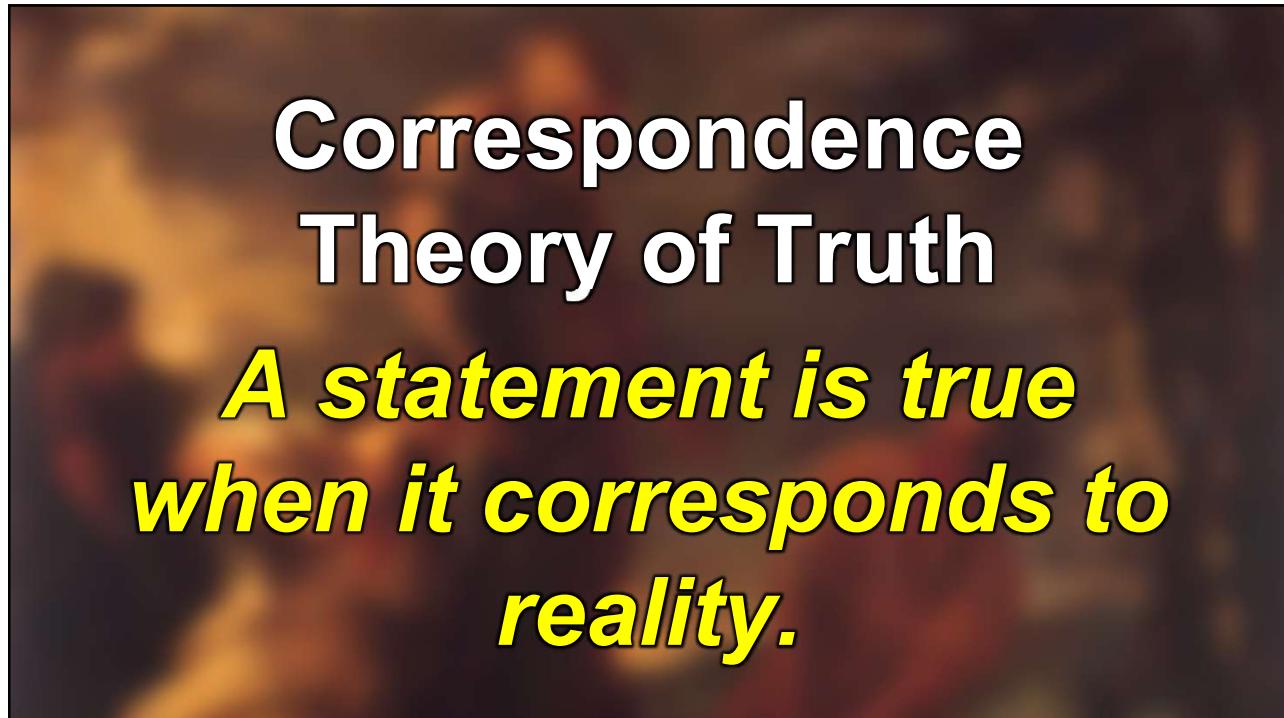
*"I am the way, the truth,  
and the life. No one  
comes to the Father  
except through Me."*

(John 14:6)



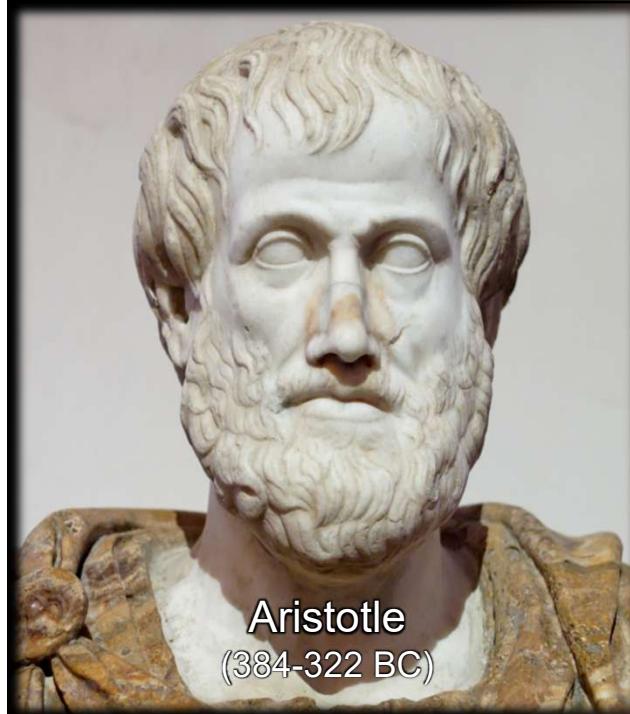
"And you shall know the truth,  
and the truth shall make you free"

(John 8:32)



Correspondence  
Theory of Truth

***A statement is true  
when it corresponds to  
reality.***



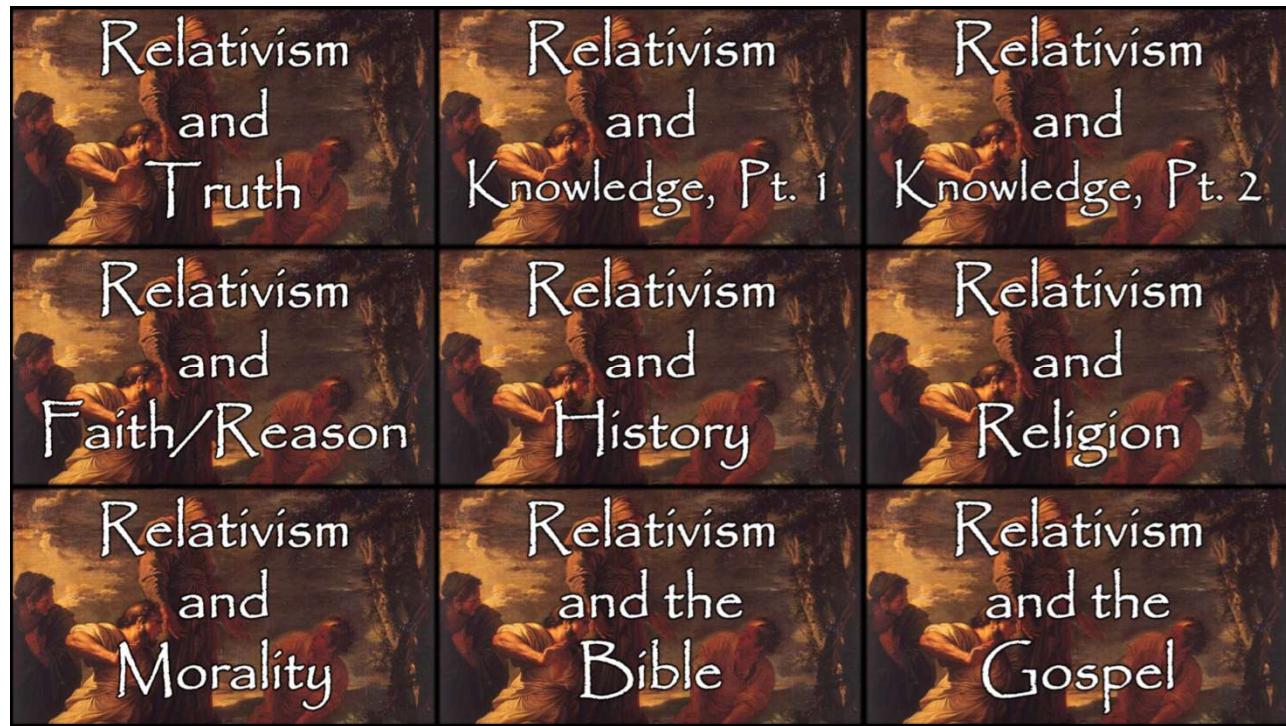
***"To say of what is, that it is not, or of what is not, that it is, is false, while to say of what is, that it is and of what is not, that it is not, is true."***

[Metaphysics, IV, 7, 1011<sup>b</sup>26-29, Translation by W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941)]

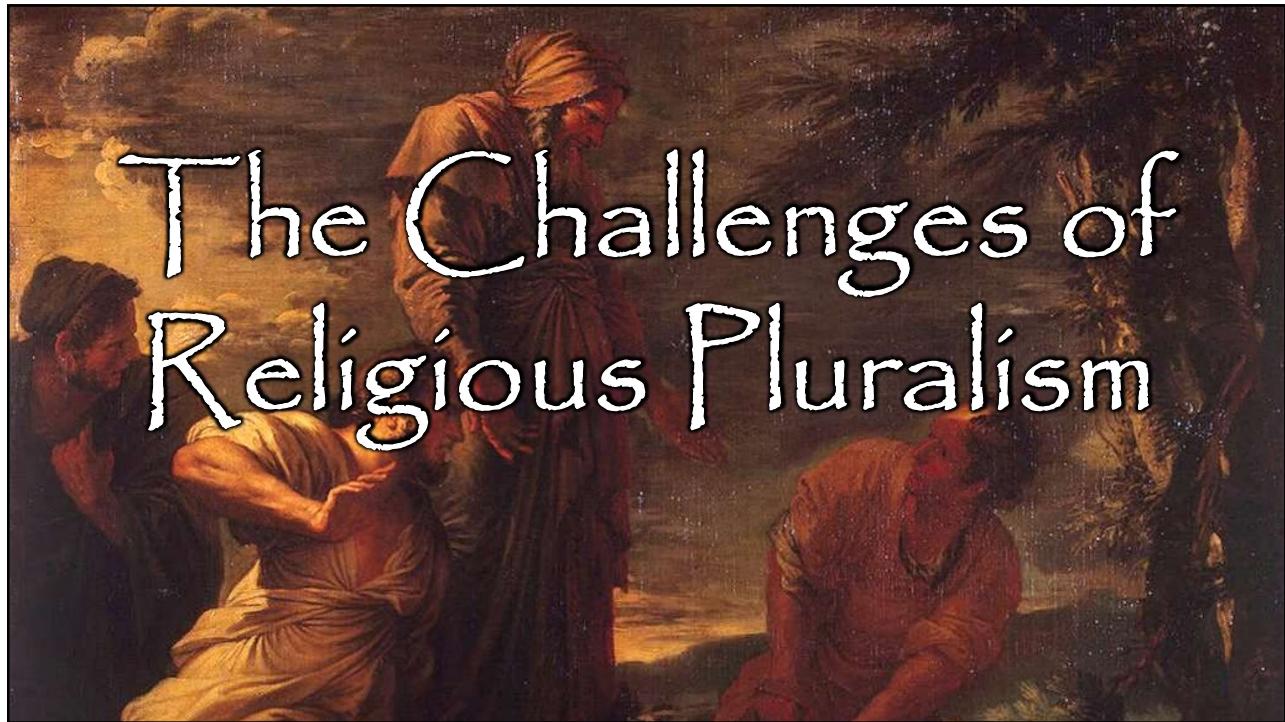


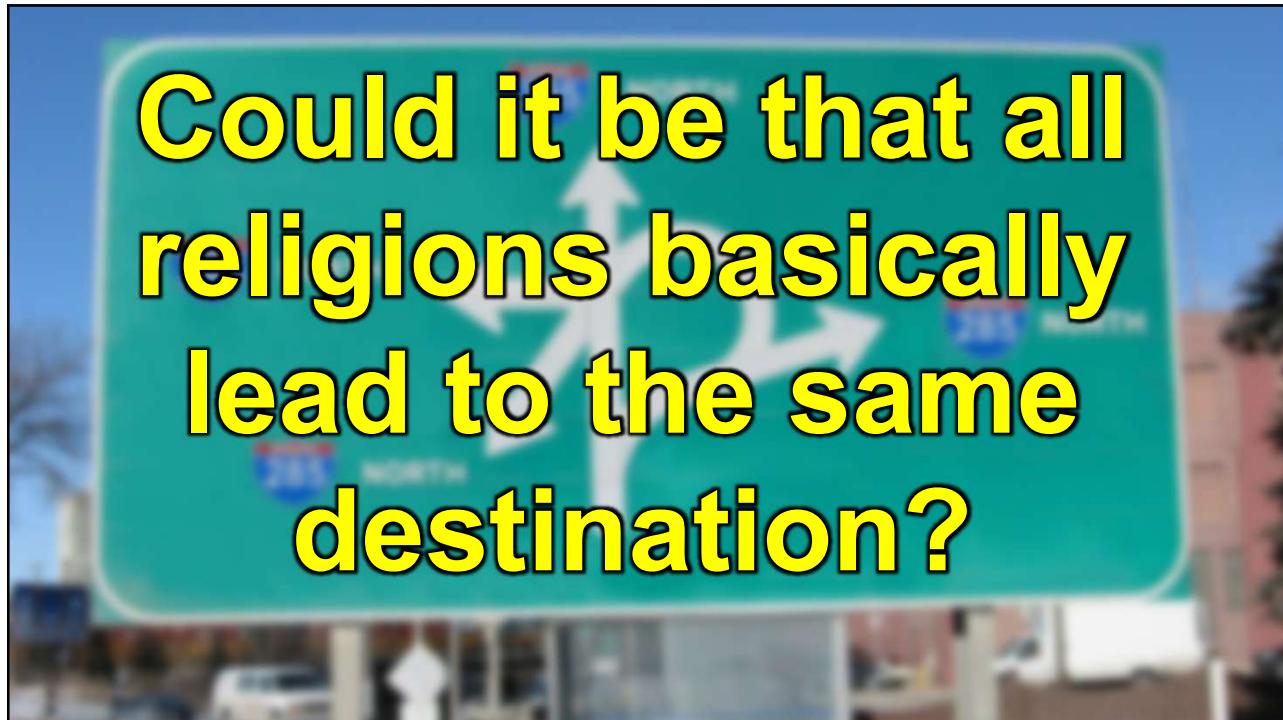
When you say that  
the statement  
**'It is raining'**  
is true, you mean that  
it corresponds to  
reality.

When you say that  
the statement  
**'It is raining'**  
is true, you mean that  
it is raining in  
reality.



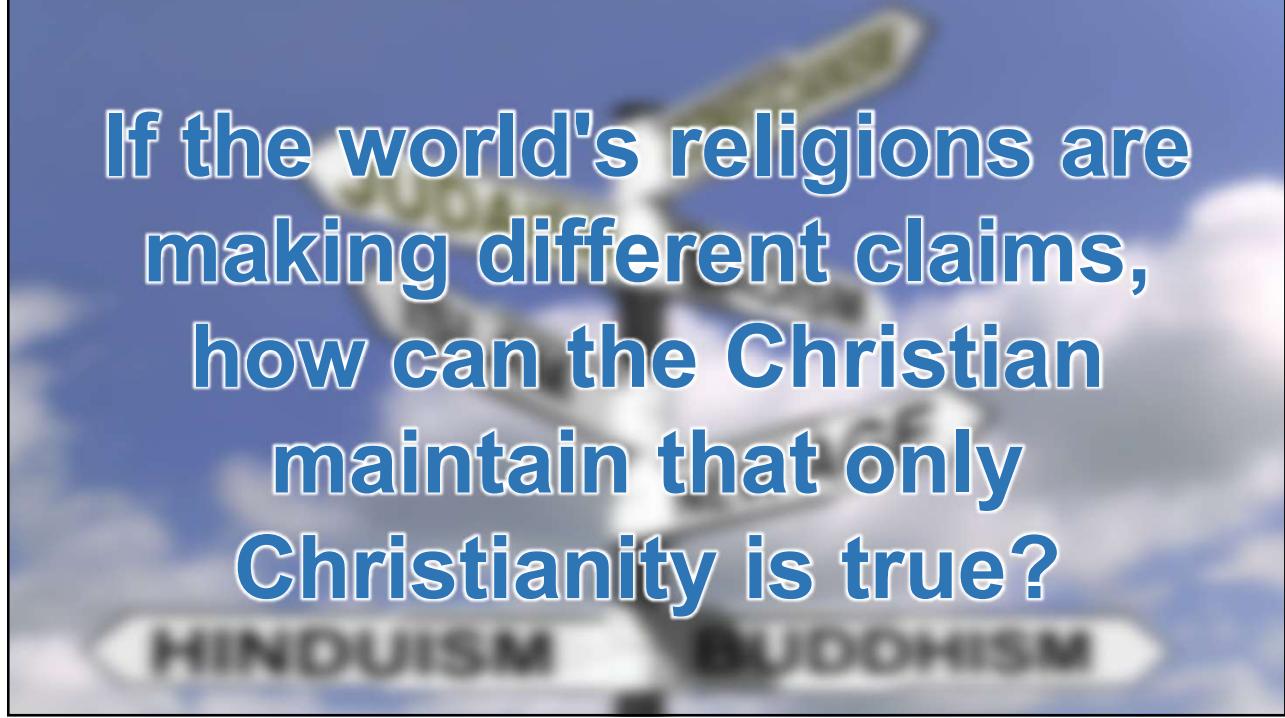
***Relativism regarding  
religion is more often  
referred to as  
religious pluralism.***



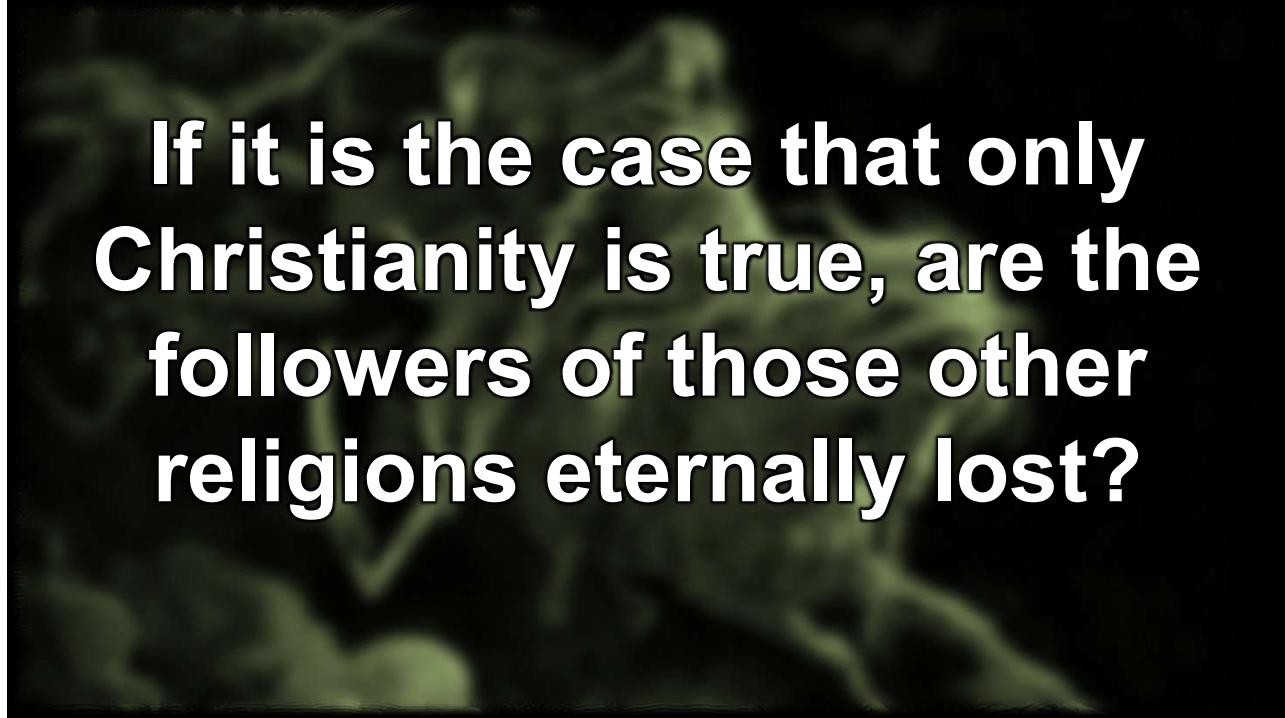


# *Are Not All Religions the Same at the Core?*

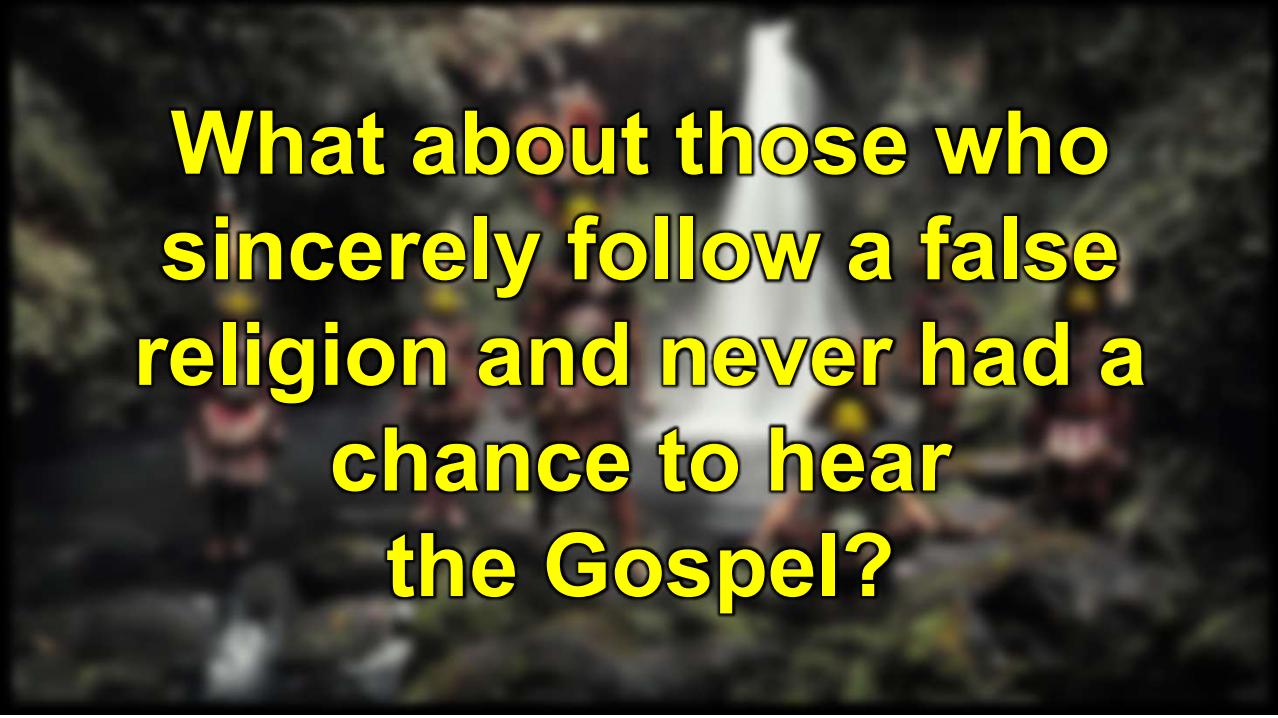
**Or is it the case that other  
religions are making  
claims that are  
incompatible with the  
claims of Christianity?**



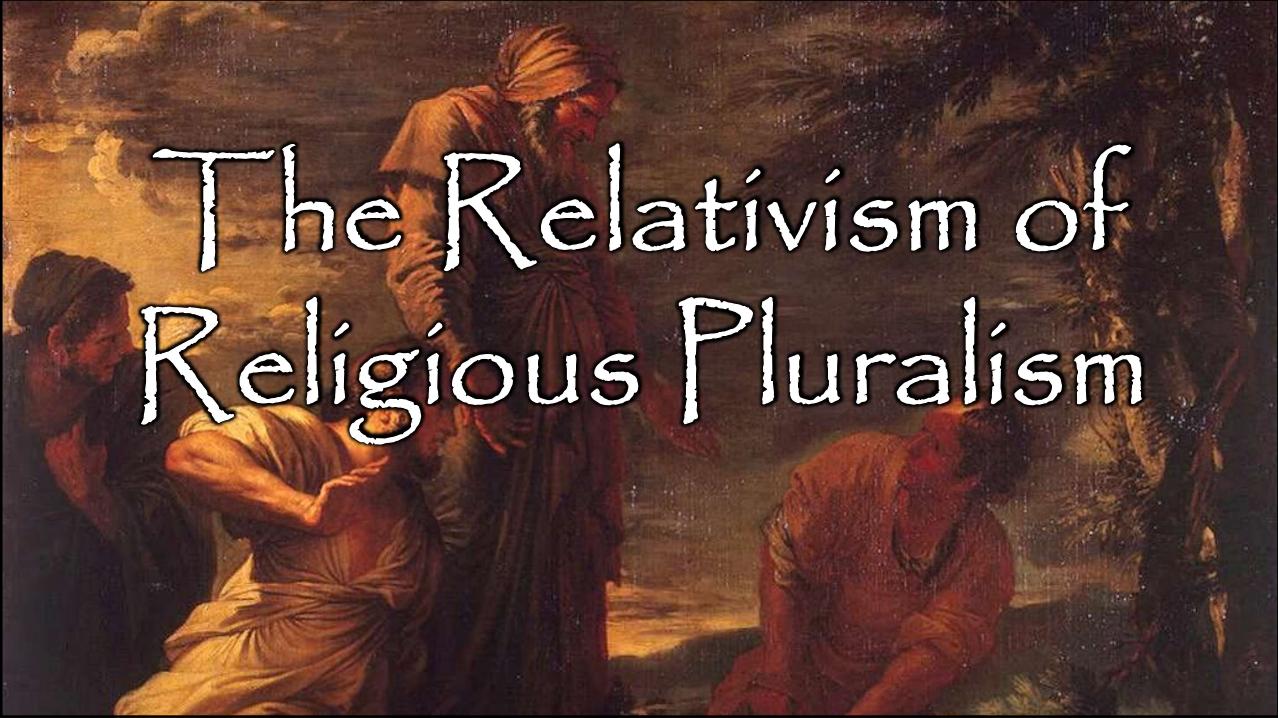
**If the world's religions are  
making different claims,  
how can the Christian  
maintain that only  
Christianity is true?**



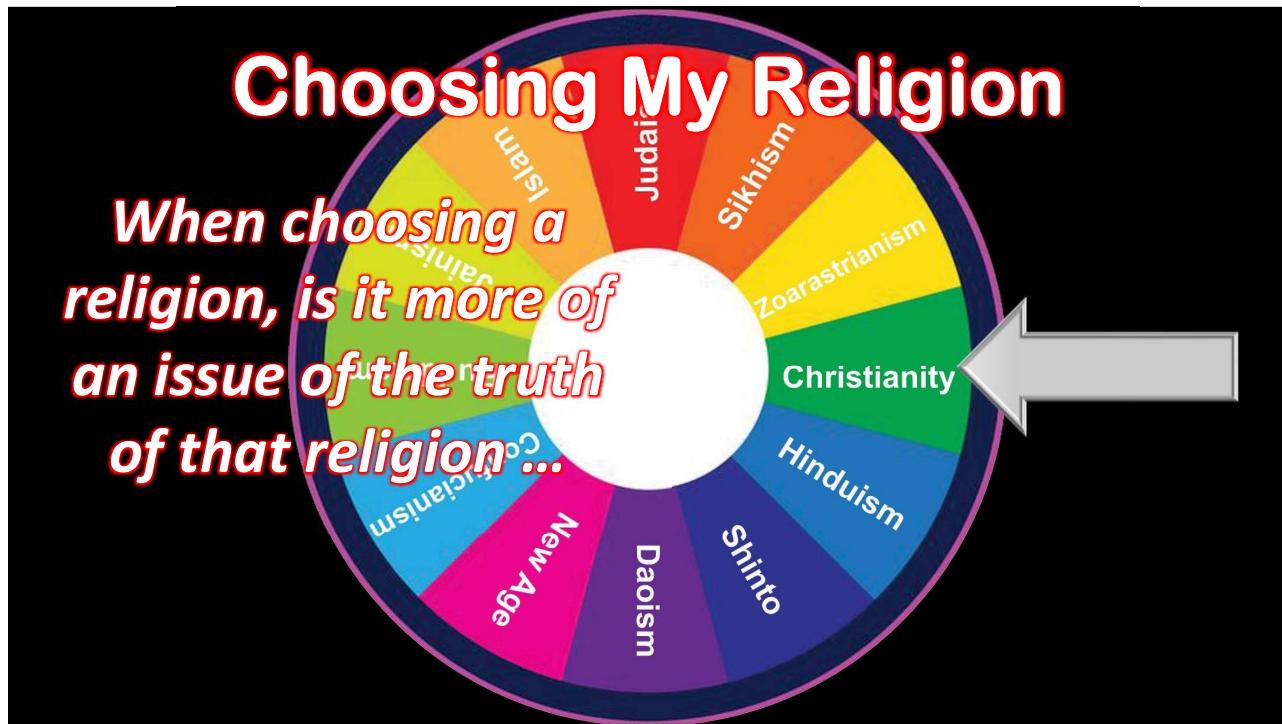
**If it is the case that only  
Christianity is true, are the  
followers of those other  
religions eternally lost?**

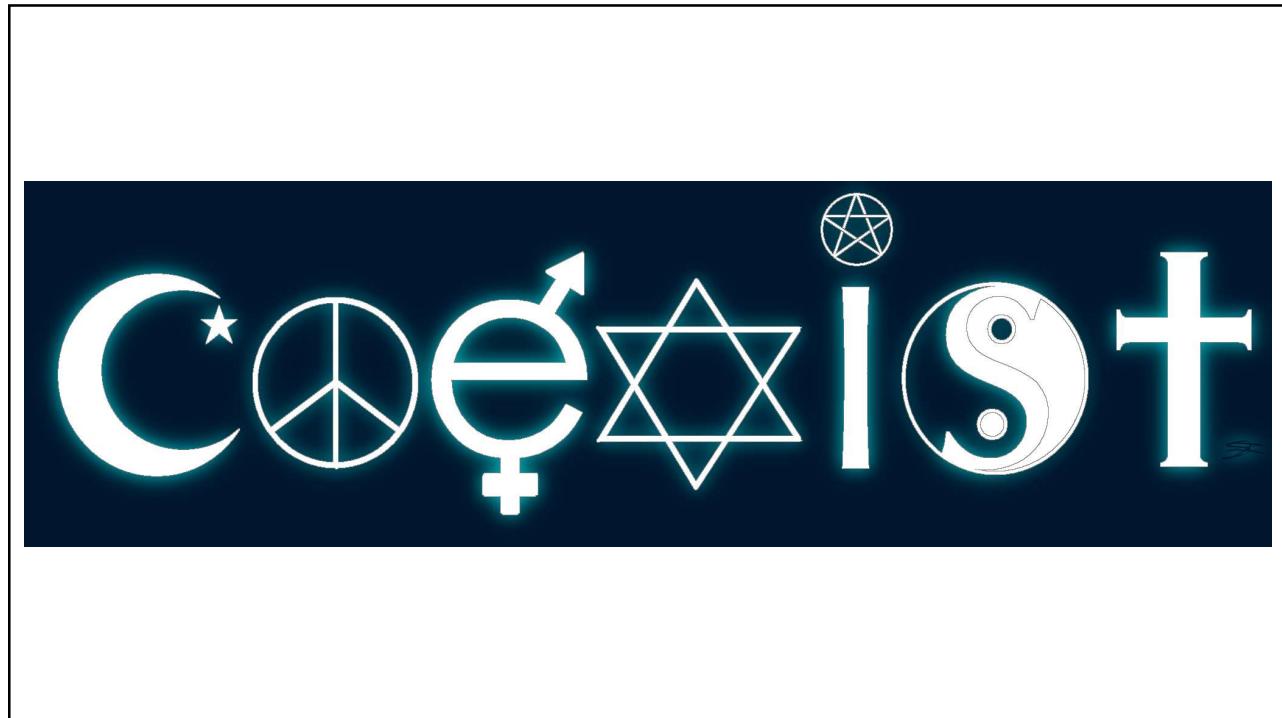
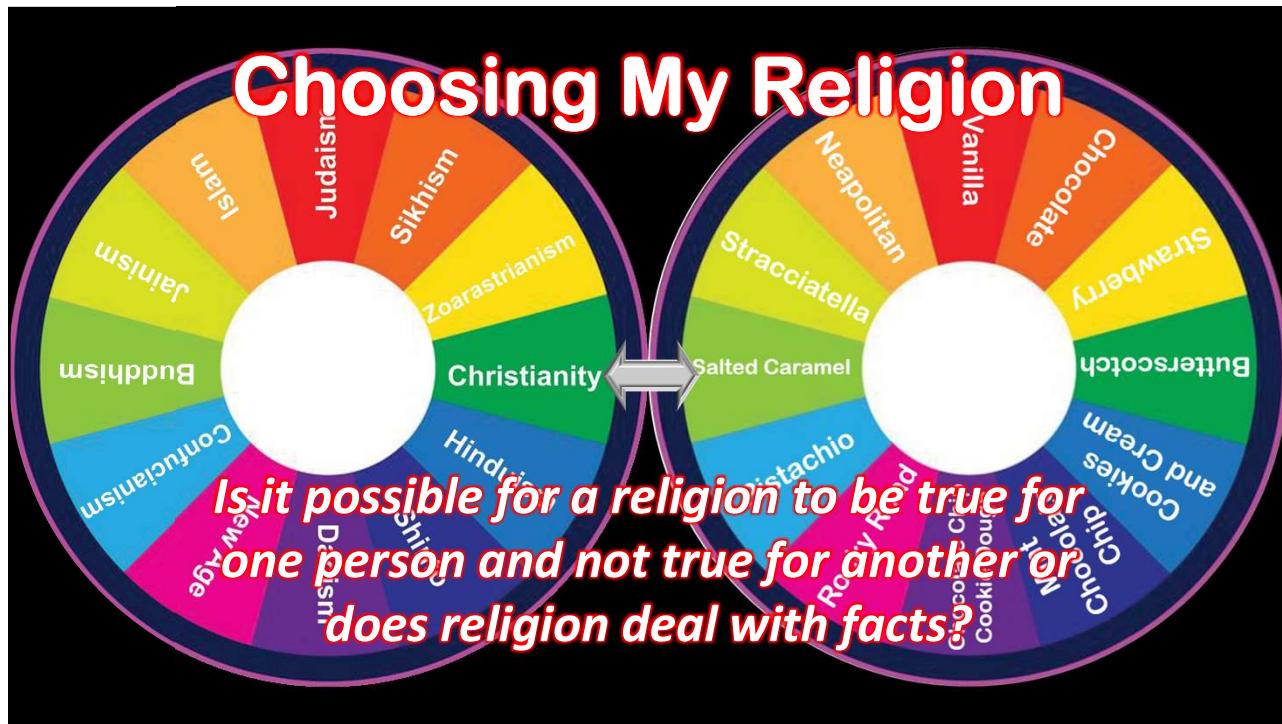


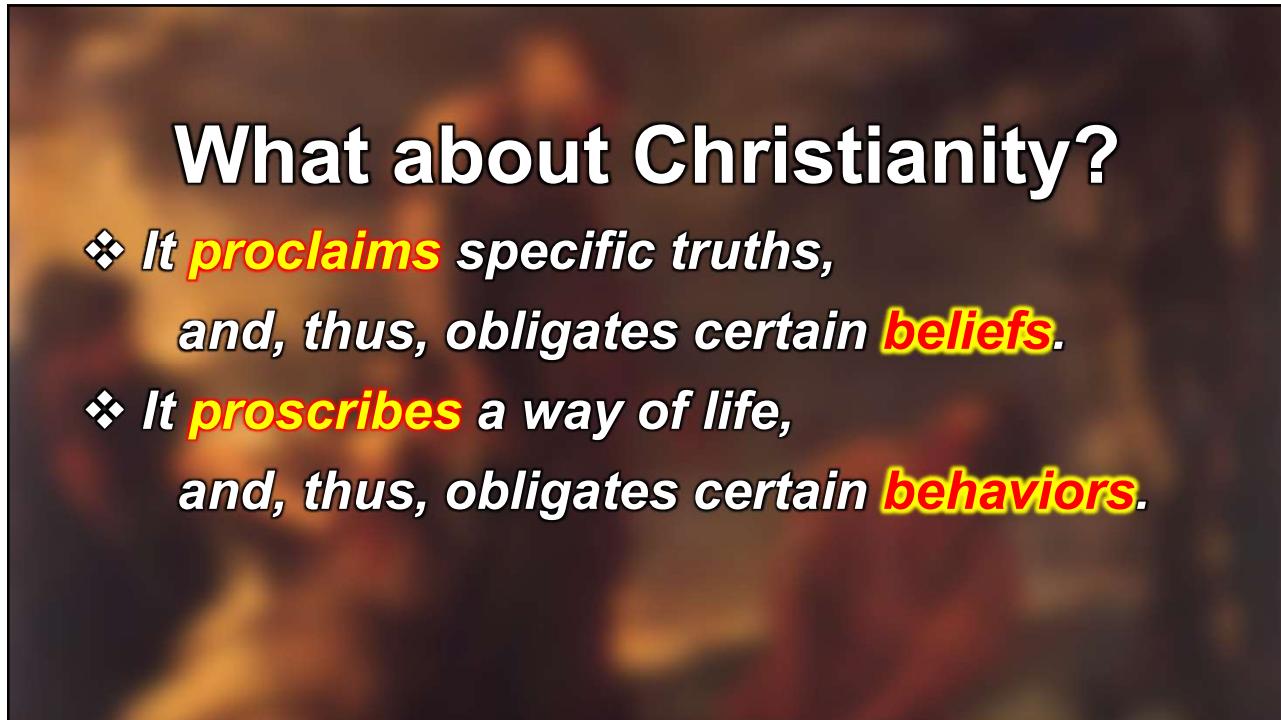
**What about those who  
sincerely follow a false  
religion and never had a  
chance to hear  
the Gospel?**

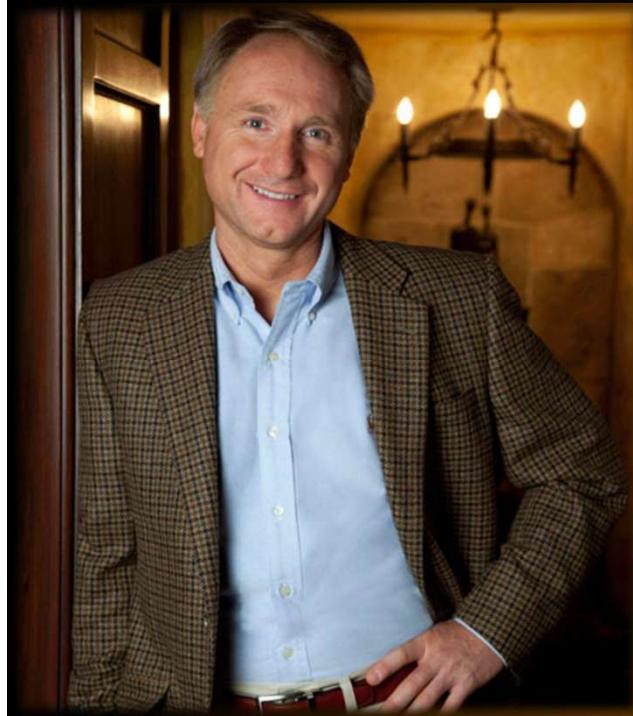
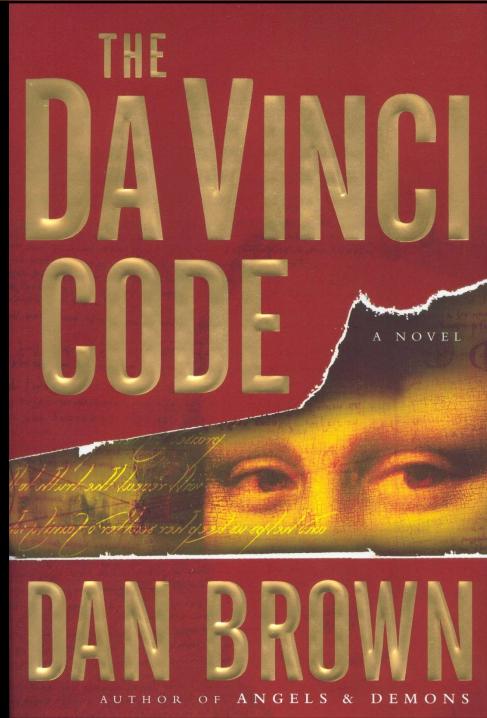
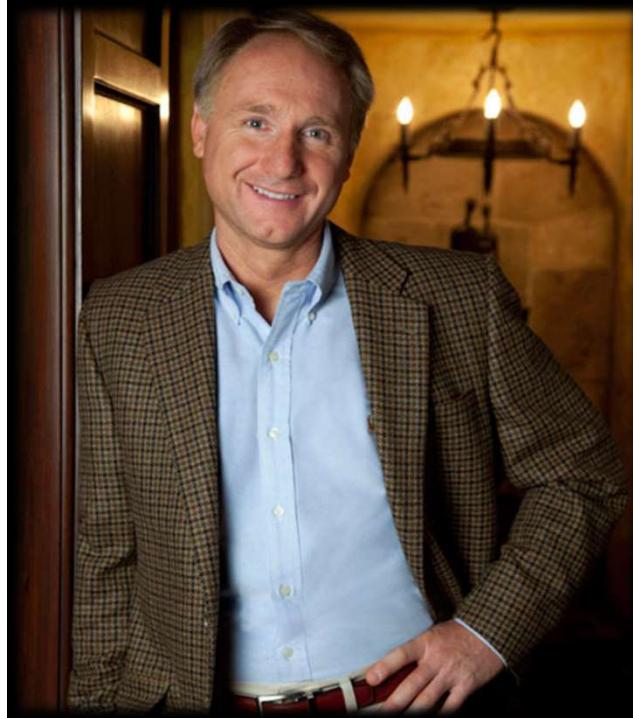


**The Relativism of  
Religious Pluralism**

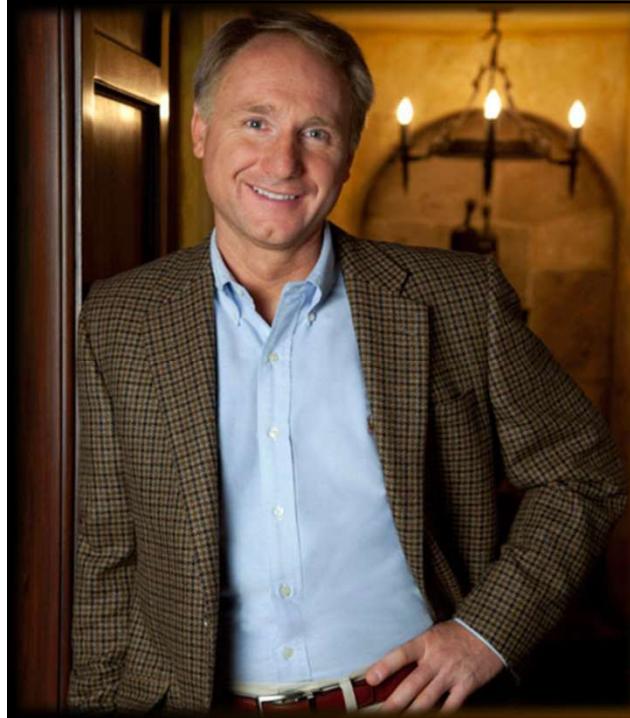




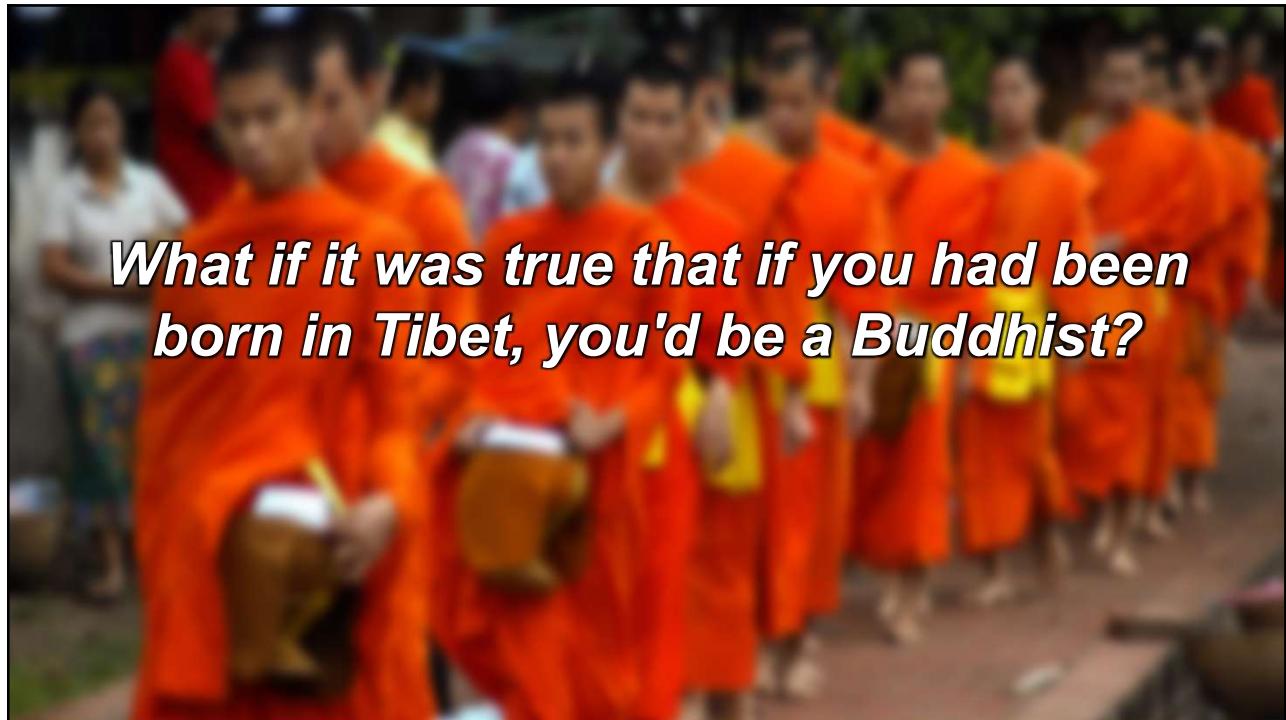




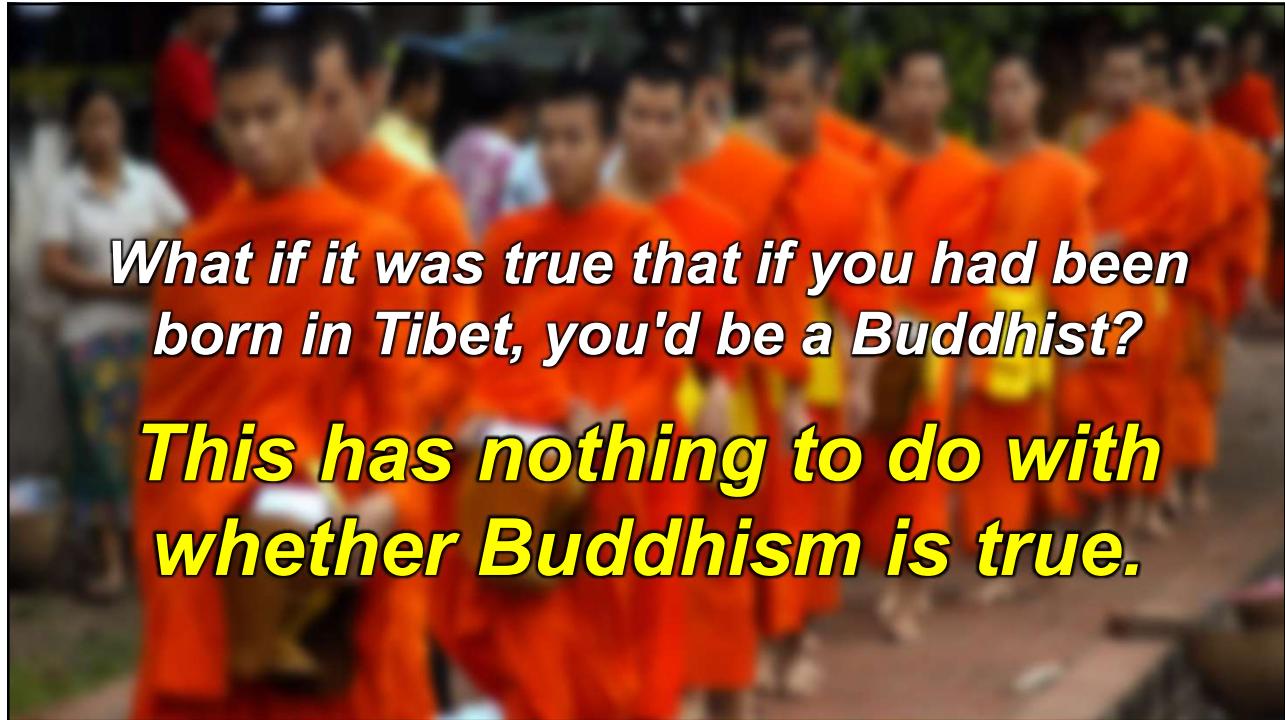
*"I humbly submit that if all of us in this room had been born in Tibet, probably a lot of us would be Buddhist. I think the chance is pretty good.*



***"And I also think  
we'd hold on to that  
Buddhist philosophy  
with all the passion  
that some of us  
might hold on to our  
Christian ideals."***

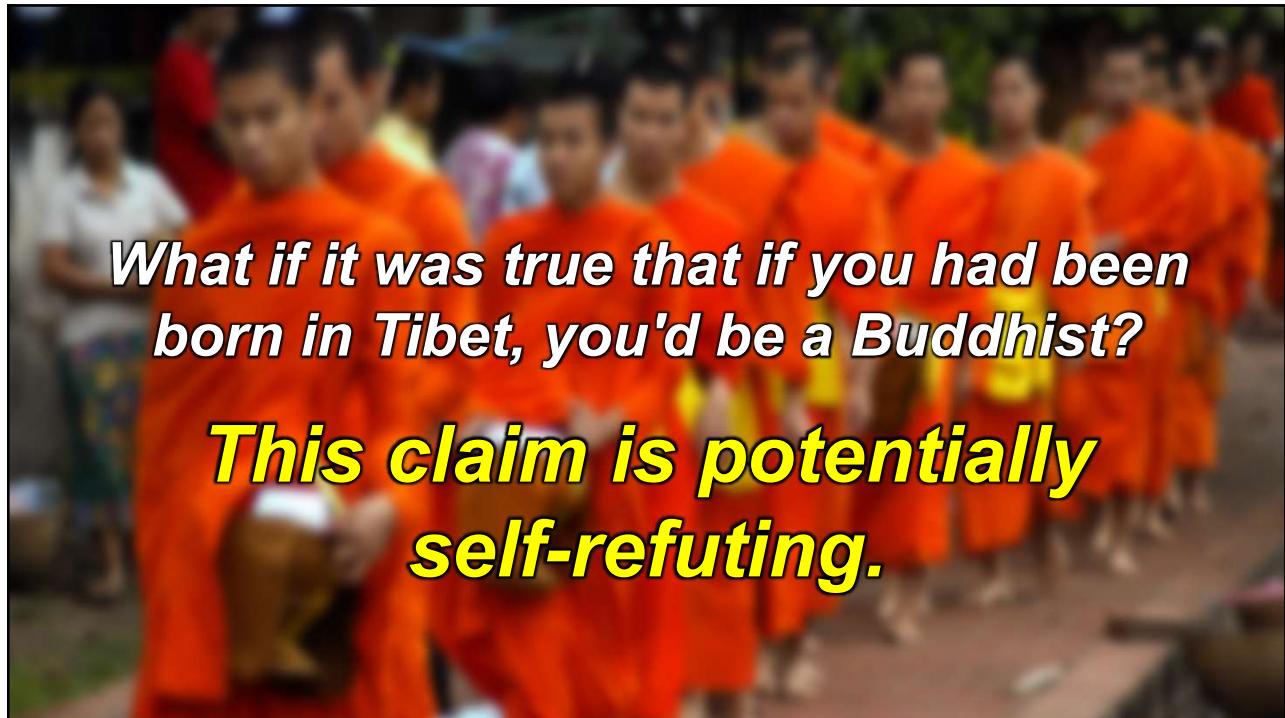


***What if it was true that if you had been  
born in Tibet, you'd be a Buddhist?***



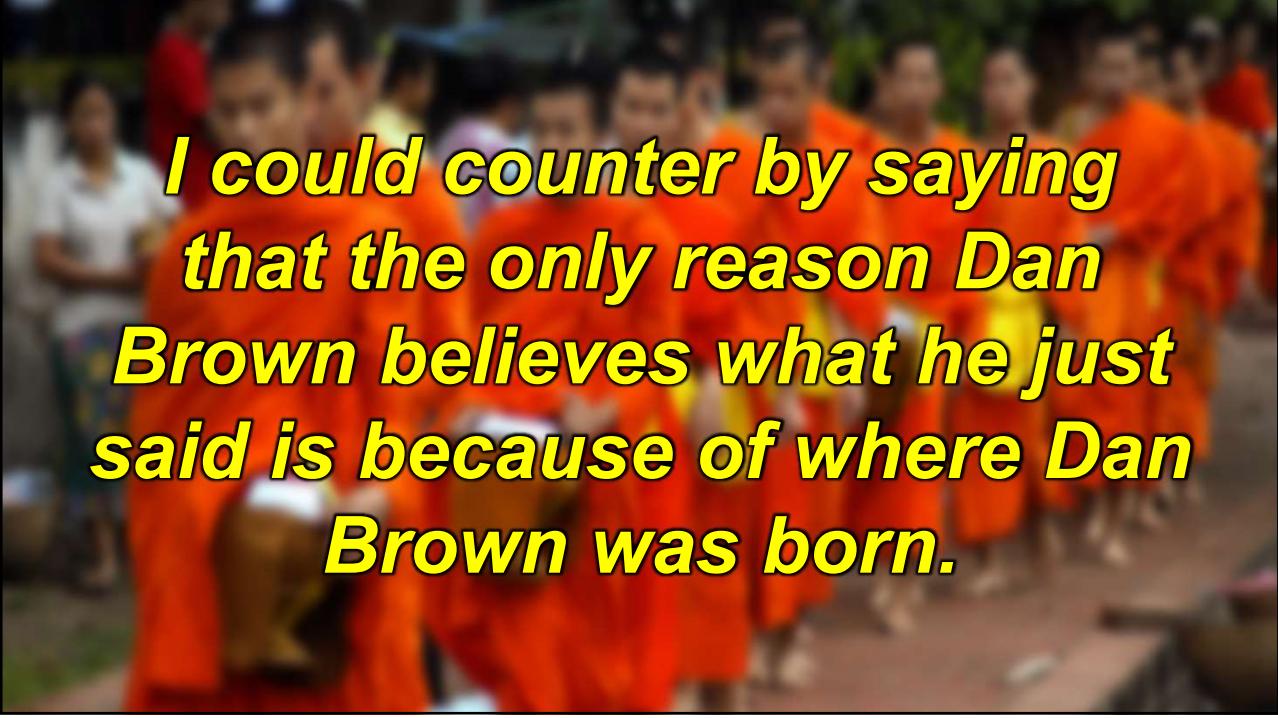
*What if it was true that if you had been born in Tibet, you'd be a Buddhist?*

***This has nothing to do with whether Buddhism is true.***

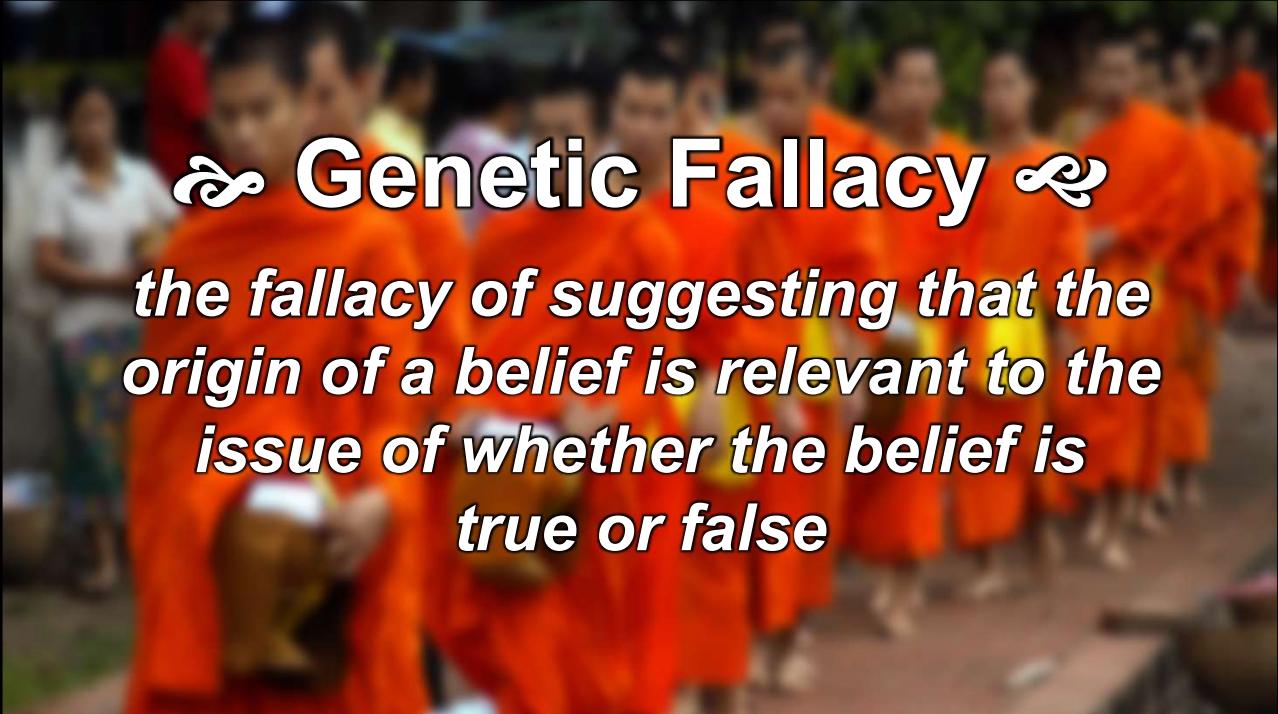


*What if it was true that if you had been born in Tibet, you'd be a Buddhist?*

***This claim is potentially self-refuting.***

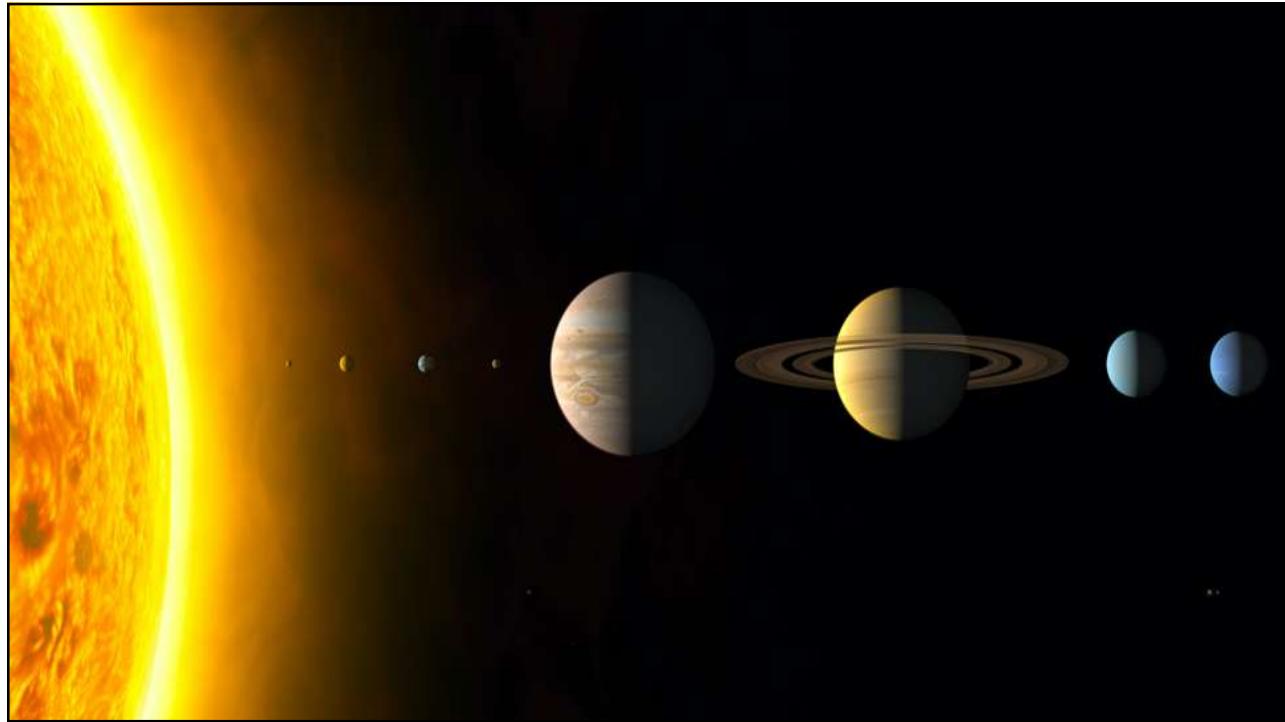


***I could counter by saying  
that the only reason Dan  
Brown believes what he just  
said is because of where Dan  
Brown was born.***

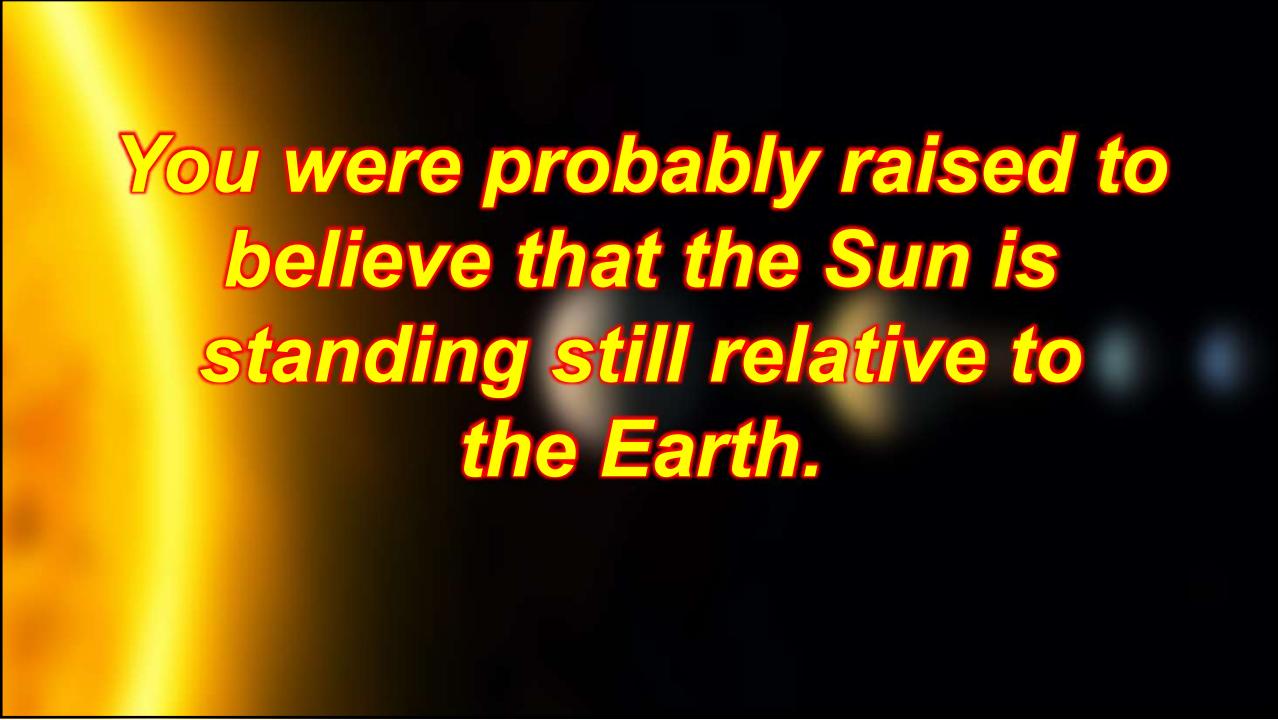


## **❖ Genetic Fallacy ❖**

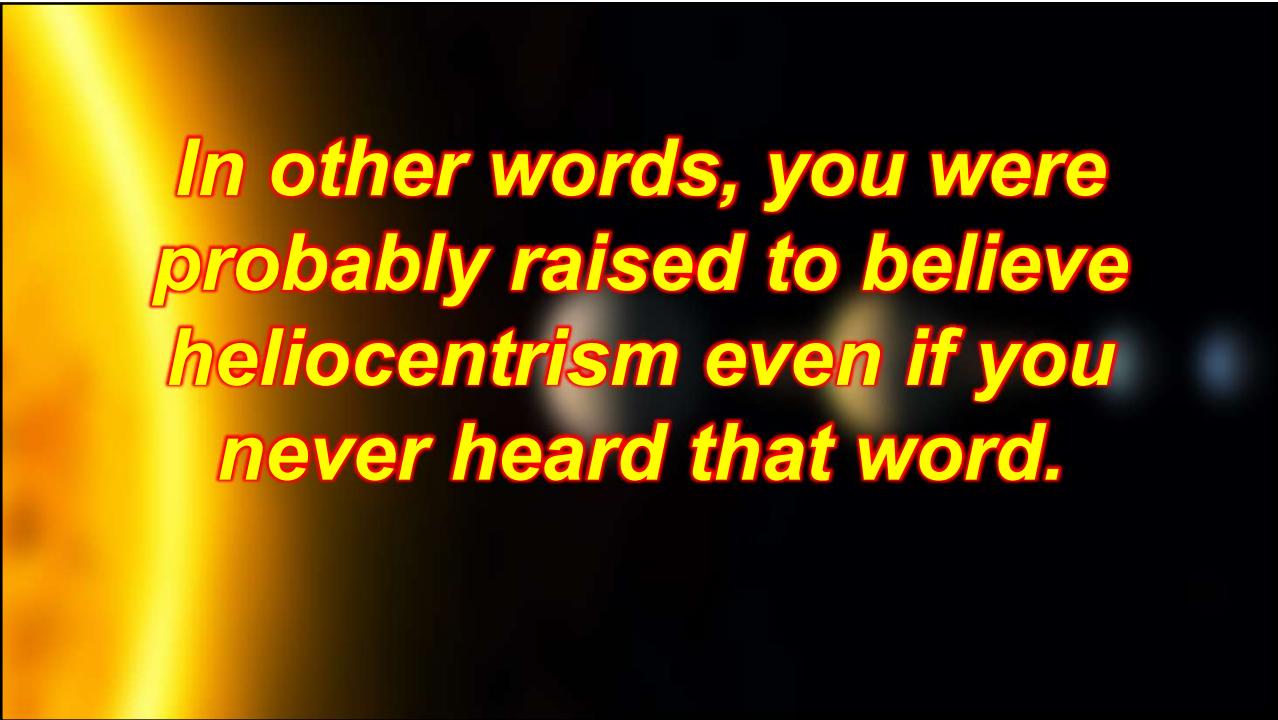
***the fallacy of suggesting that the  
origin of a belief is relevant to the  
issue of whether the belief is  
true or false***



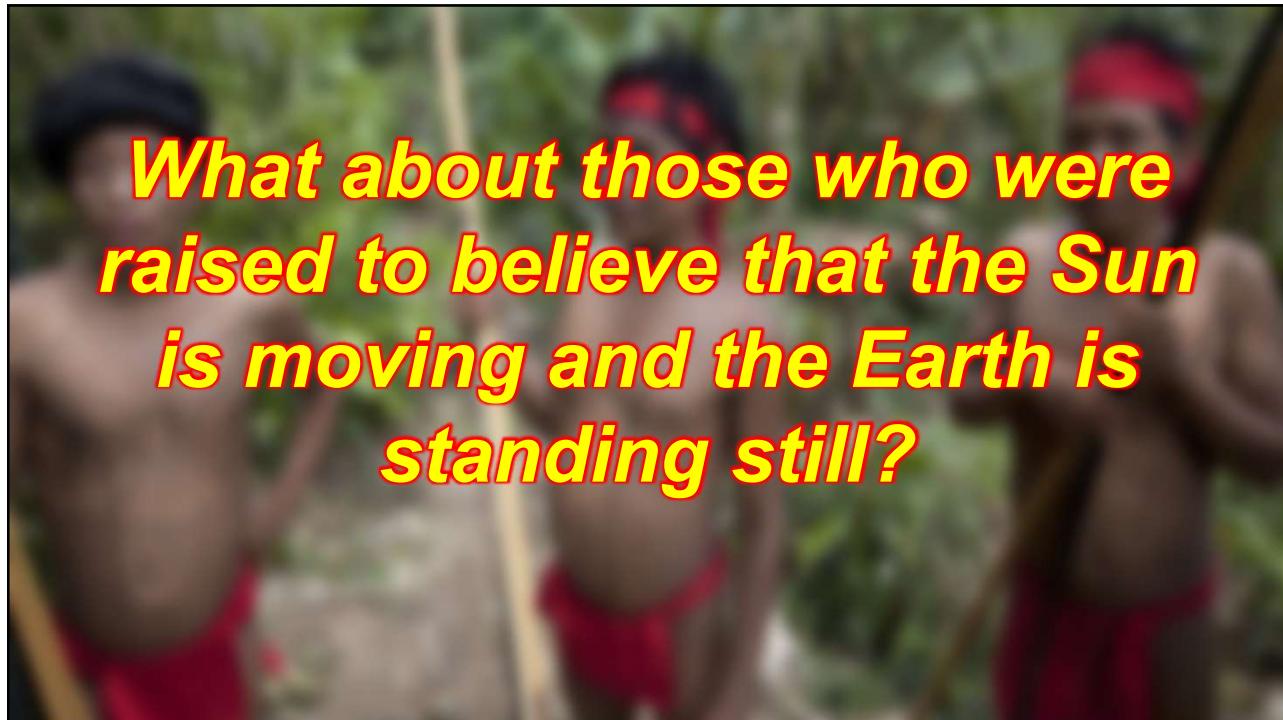
# ***Geocentrism*** ***vs.*** ***Heliocentrism***

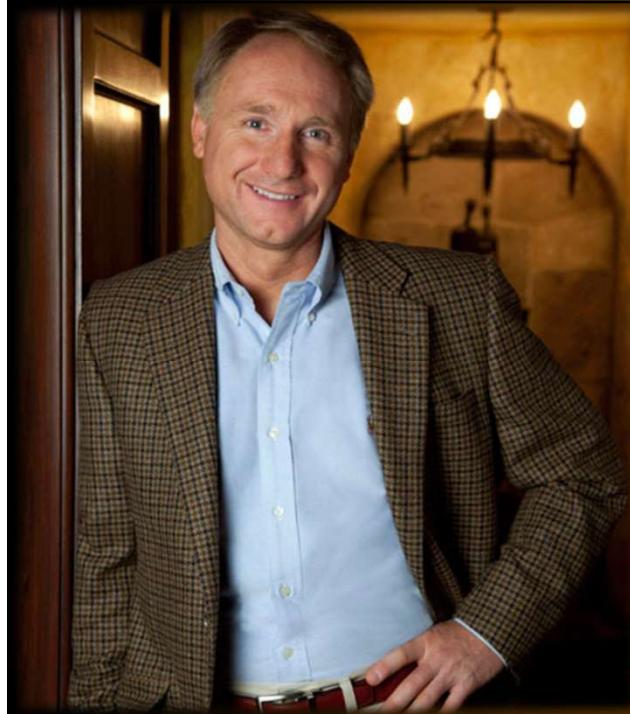


***You were probably raised to  
believe that the Sun is  
standing still relative to  
the Earth.***

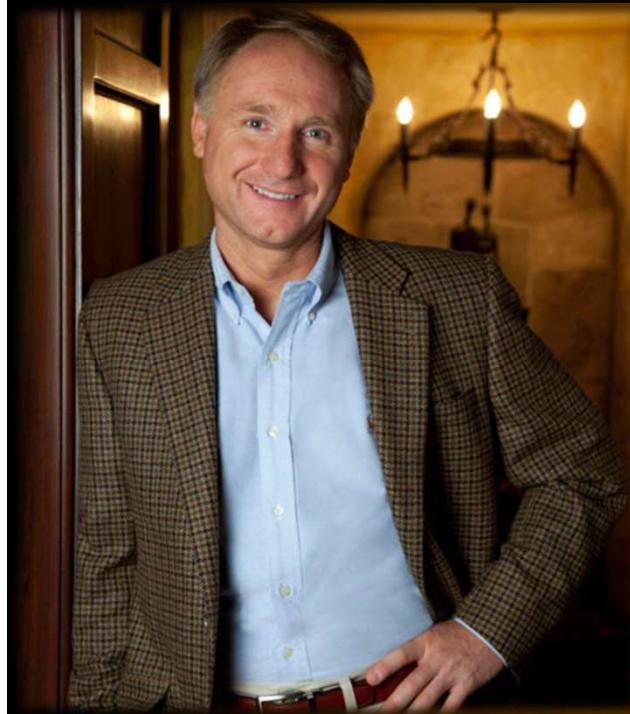


***In other words, you were  
probably raised to believe  
heliocentrism even if you  
never heard that word.***

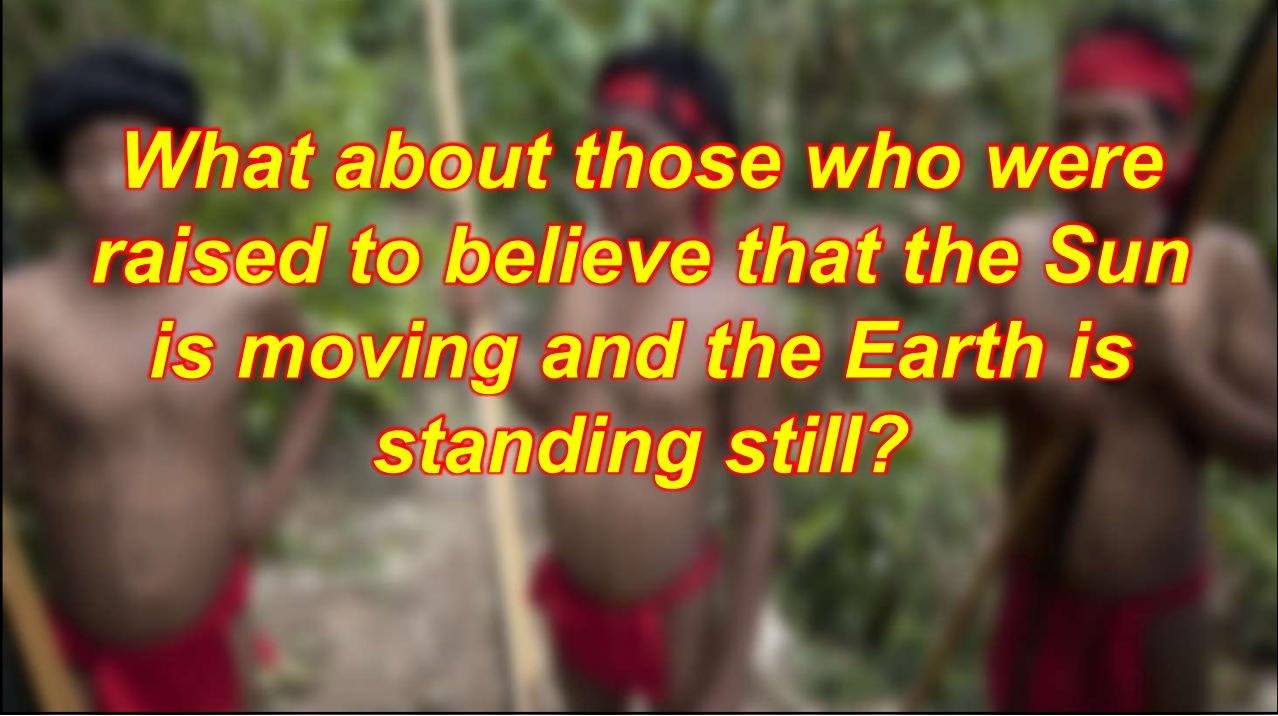




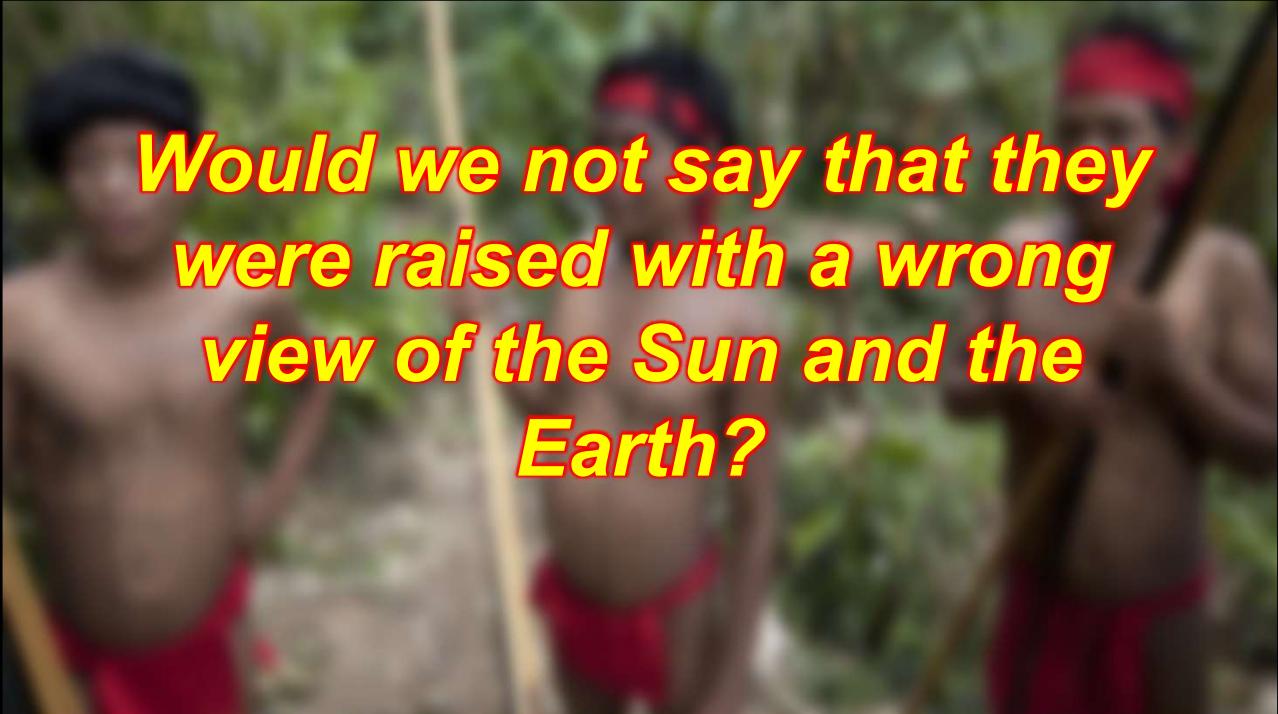
***"I humbly submit that if all of us in this room had been born in the Amazon jungle, probably a lot of us would be Geocentrists. I think the chance is pretty good.***



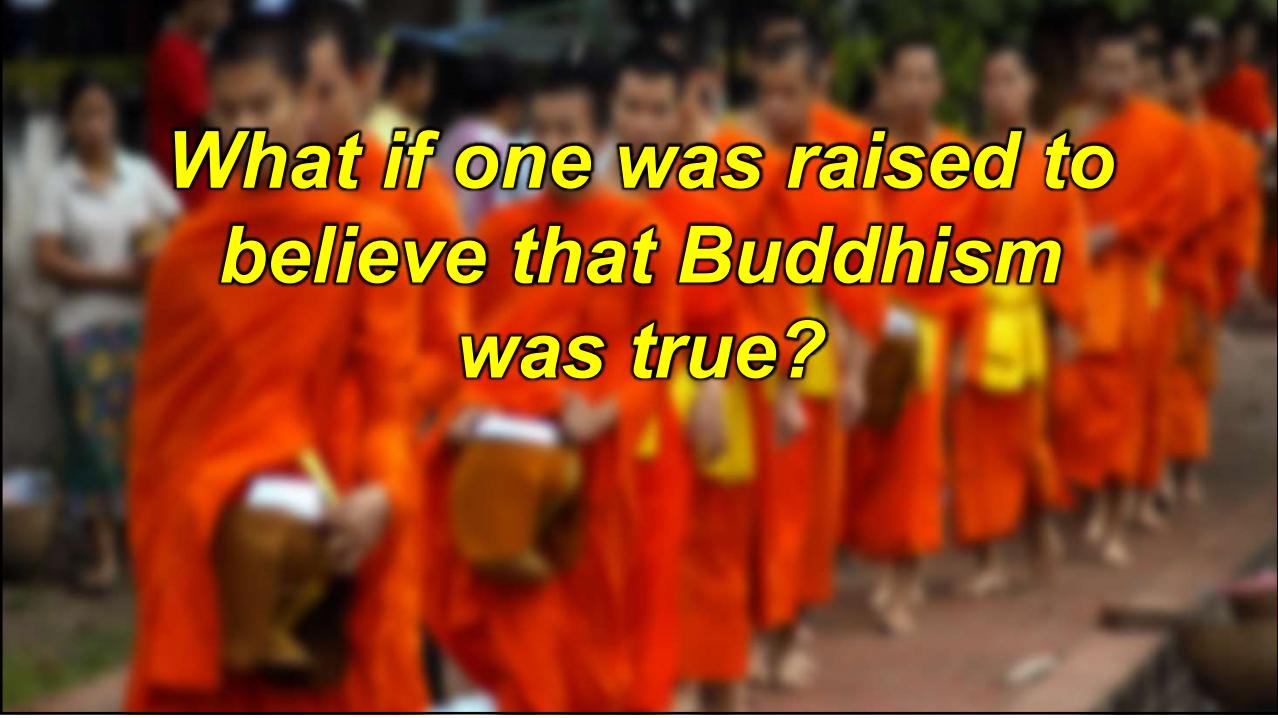
***"And I also think we'd hold on to that Geocentric philosophy with all the passion that some of us might hold on to our Heliocentric ideals."***



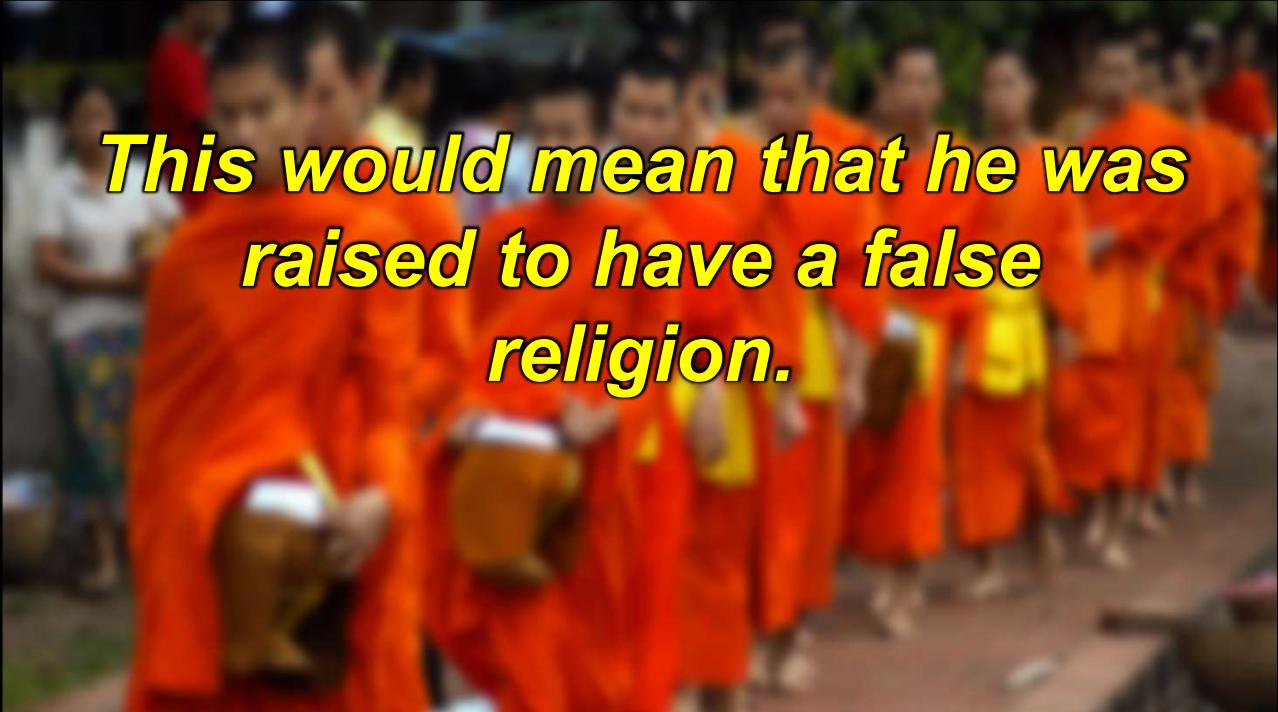
***What about those who were raised to believe that the Sun is moving and the Earth is standing still?***



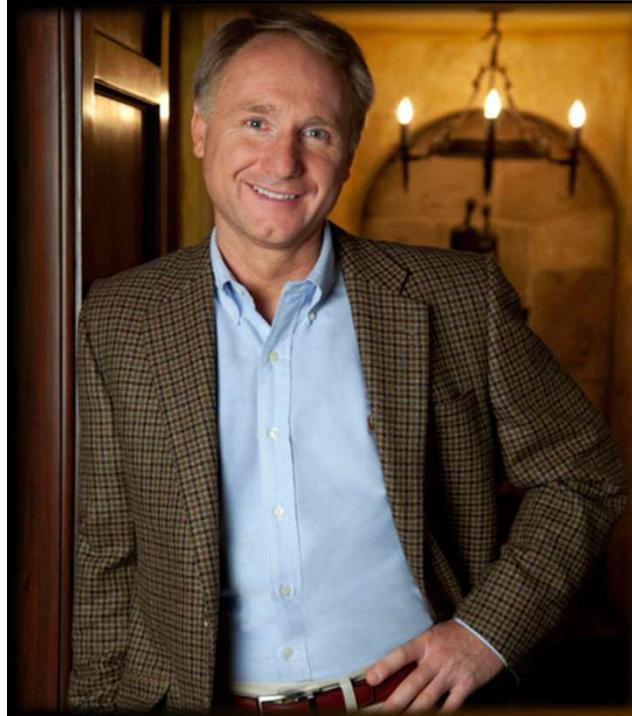
***Would we not say that they were raised with a wrong view of the Sun and the Earth?***



***What if one was raised to  
believe that Buddhism  
was true?***



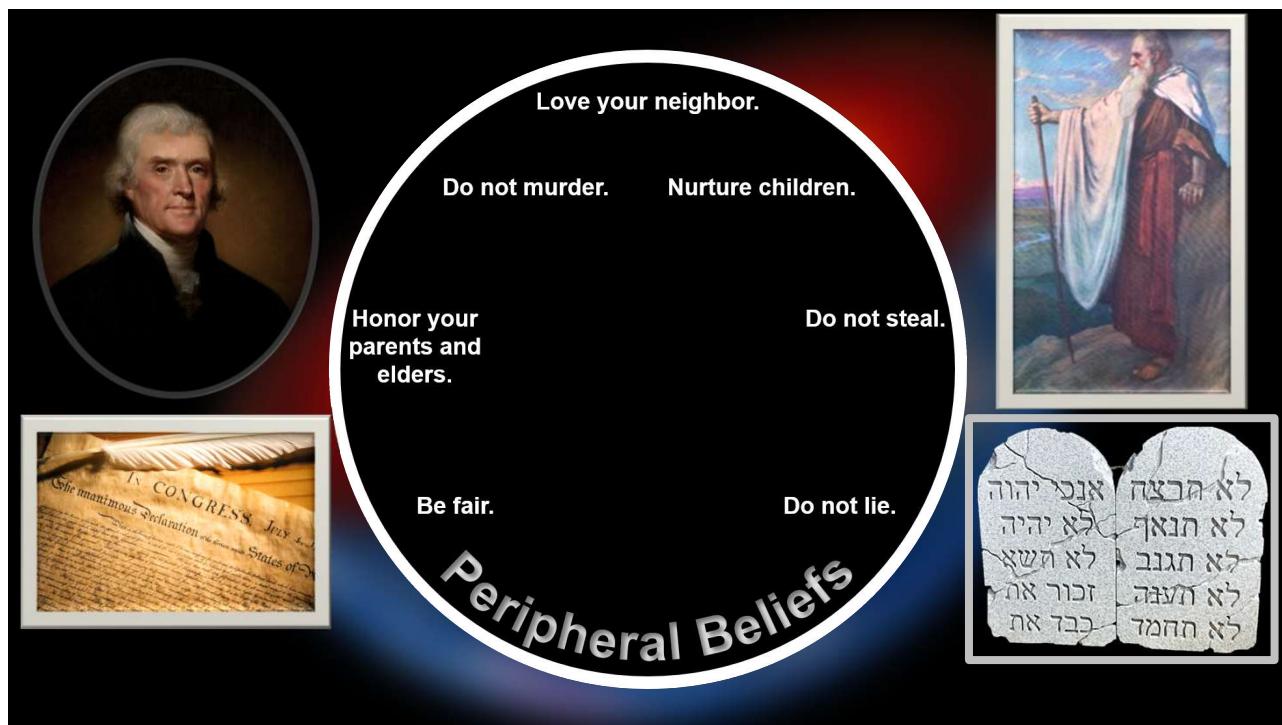
***This would mean that he was  
raised to have a false  
religion.***



***"How do you  
know that your  
Christianity is  
true and that  
Buddhism is  
false?"***

***Are Not All  
Religions the  
Same at the Core?***

# Core Beliefs vs. Peripheral Beliefs



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

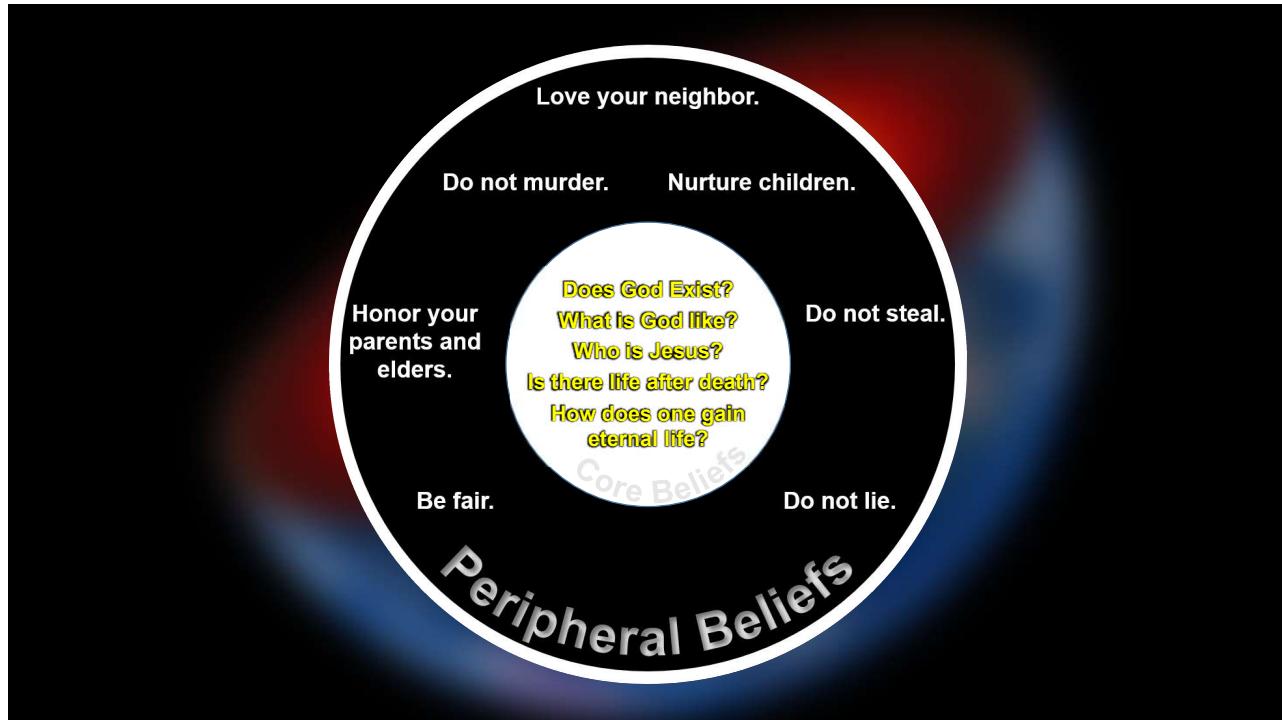
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to—  
 pursue among the powers of the earth, the objects and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they—  
 should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.— Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constitutes them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let事实 be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.— He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.— He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, until those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right insuperable to them and formidable to Tyrants only.— He has called together Legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable and distant from the Depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.— He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.— He has refused for along time, after such dissolution, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsion within.— He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of lands.— He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.— He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.— He has created a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither persons of obscure places, and cut off this Justice.— He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the consent of our legislatures.— He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.— He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation.— For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.— For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Misdemeanors which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States.— For cutting off

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

*The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.*  
 "...the Laws of Nature  
 and of Nature's God..."



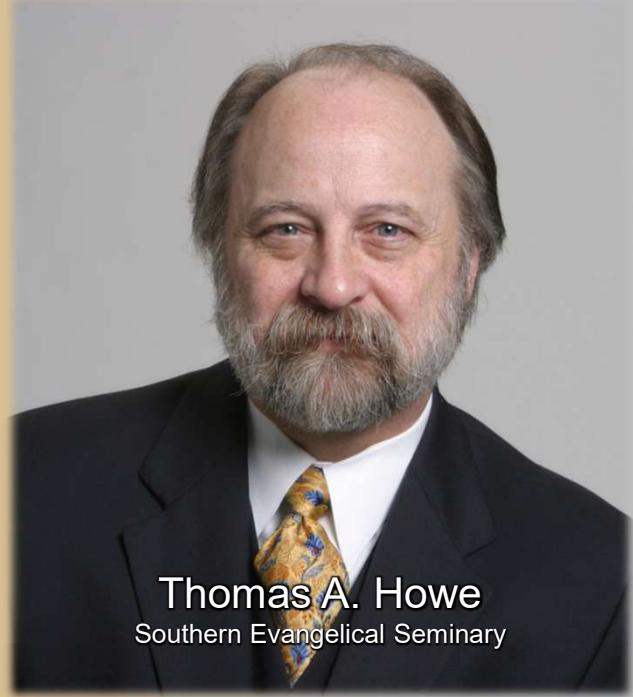


***The notion of relativism with respect to history is sometimes called historicism.***

*“The inescapability of one’s perspective and its relation to the problem of objectivity in historical knowledge has been identified as the primary problem of historicism.”*

[Thomas A. Howe, Class Notes PH515 Philosophy of Hermeneutics, 25]

Thomas A. Howe  
Southern Evangelical Seminary



*Historicism maintains that one's place in history (situatedness) **unavoidably** and **inescapably** prevents one from objective knowledge about reality.*

*One can see the impact of historicism regarding whether it is possible to make objective moral judgments about other cultures and whether it is possible to make objective judgments about biblical interpretation, especially regarding historical events.*

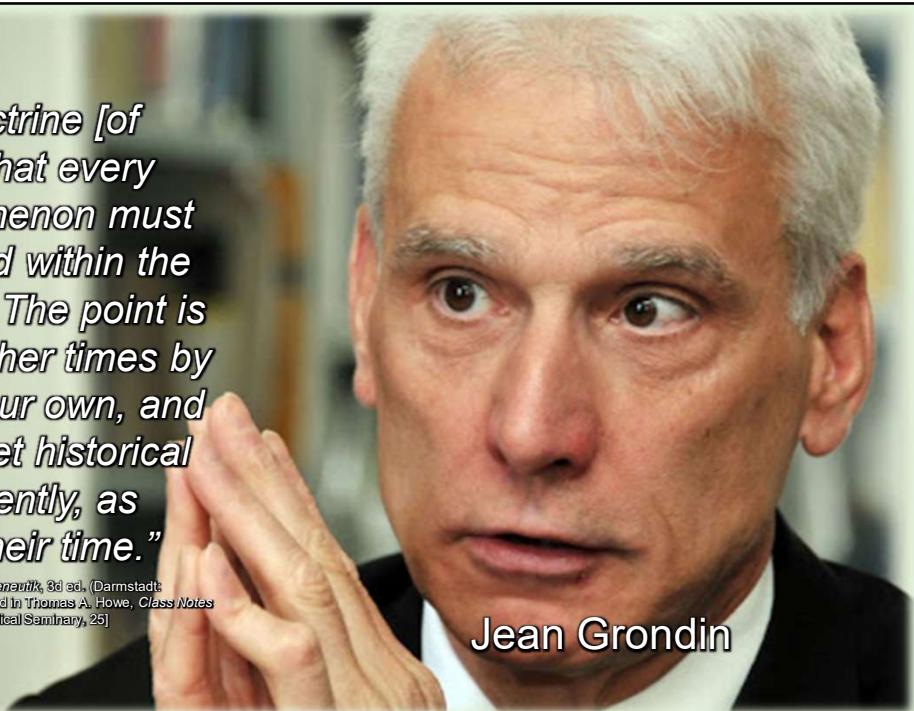
## ∞ Why History Matters ∞

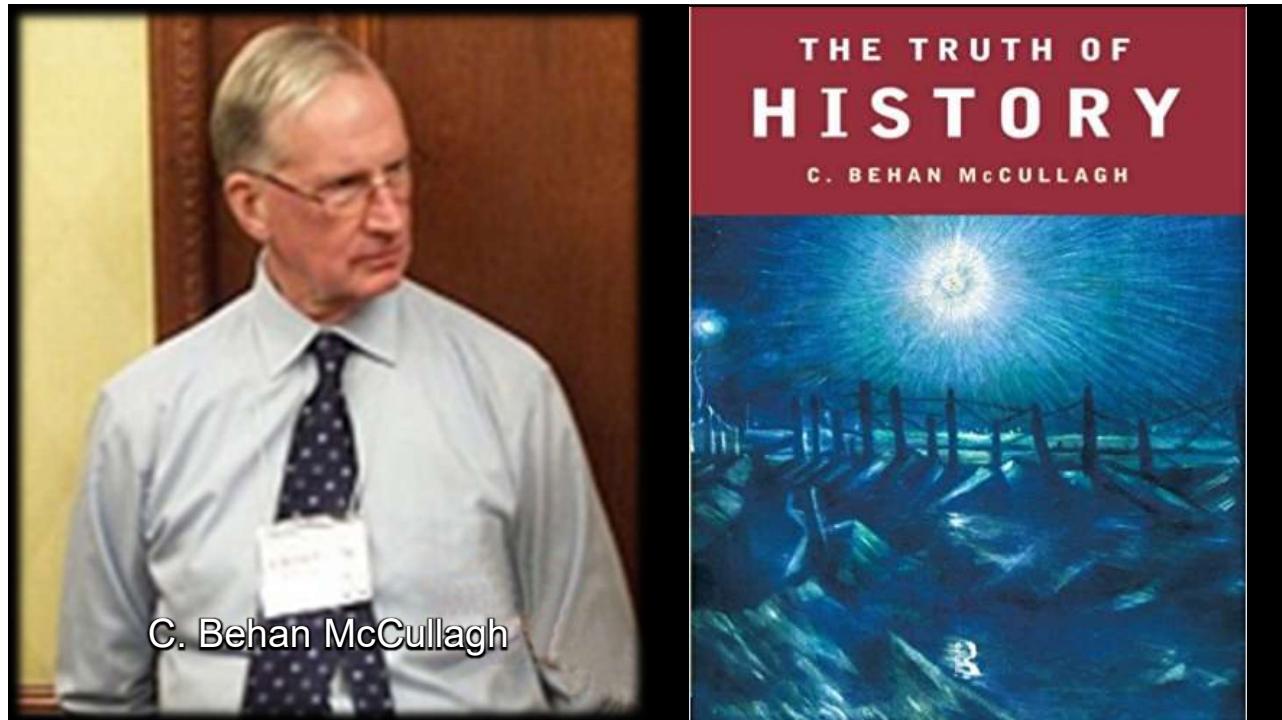
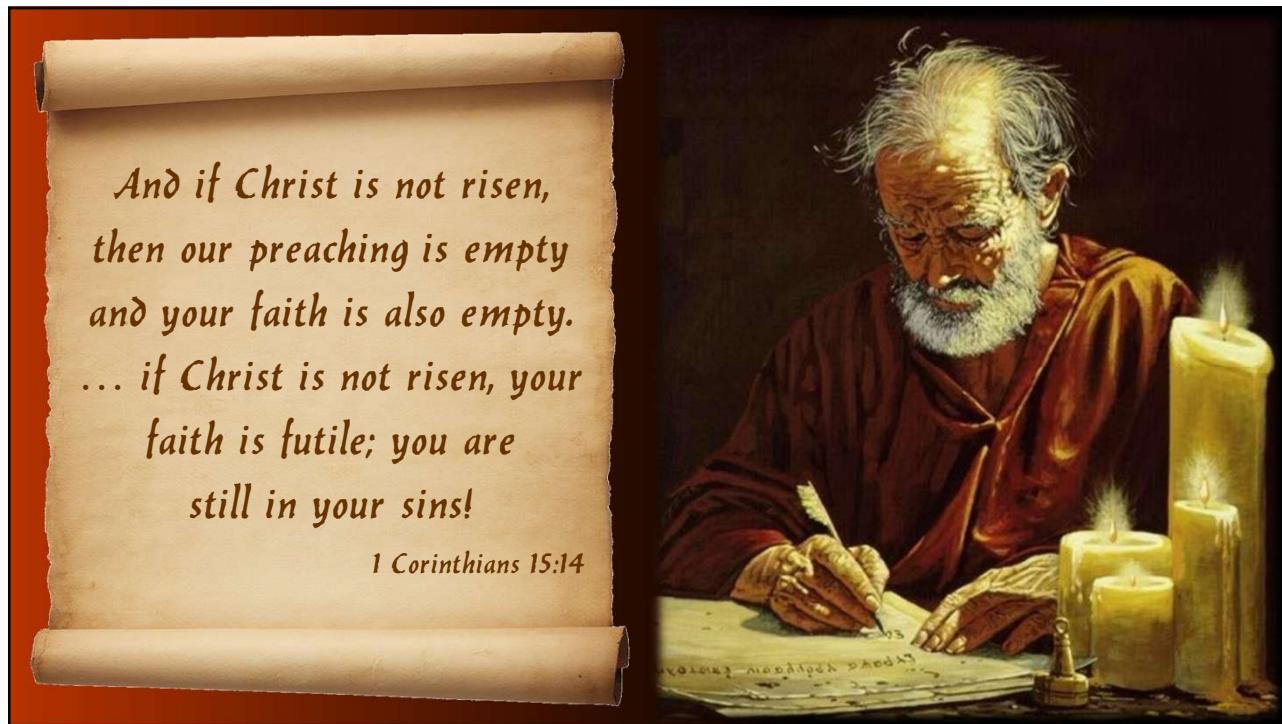
- ❖ **Though Christianity contains a philosophy, it more than philosophy.**
- ❖ **Though Christianity proscribes a lifestyle, it is more than a lifestyle.**
- ❖ **Christianity is grounded in a real event where God "invaded" history in the Incarnation.**
- ❖ **Jesus Christ, God in human form lived, died, and rose again.**
- ❖ **This is an objective truth of history.**

*"The basic doctrine [of historicism] is that every particular phenomenon must be conceptualized within the context of its age. The point is to avoid judging other times by the standards of our own, and instead to interpret historical events immanently, as expressive of their time."*

[Jean Grondin, *Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik*, 3d ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012), 115, as cited in Thomas A. Howe, *Class Notes PHL118 Philosophy of Hermeneutics*, Southern Evangelical Seminary, 25]

Jean Grondin







C. Behan McCullagh

THE TRUTH OF

*"First, scientists tell us that our perceptions are caused by things in the world stimulating our sense receptors ...*

*This being so, our perceptions are best described as providing us with information about reality, but not necessarily mirroring it precisely. ...*



C. Behan McCullagh

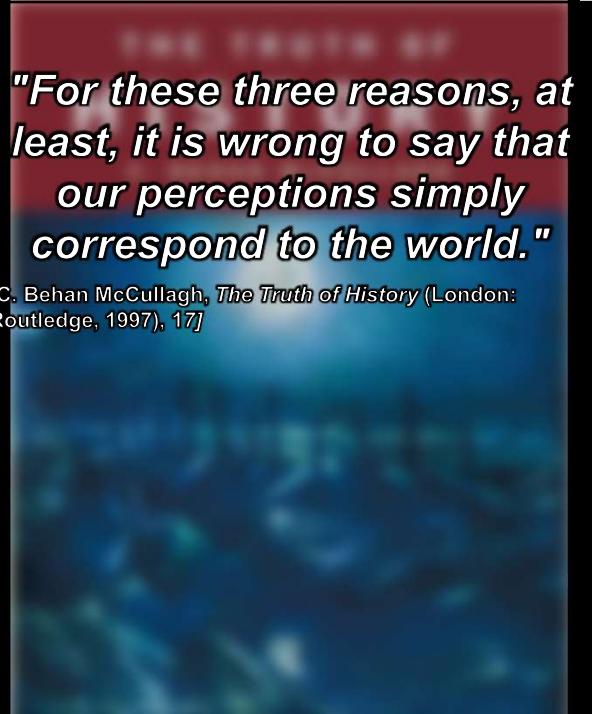
THE TRUTH OF

*"Second, our perceptions are influenced by our culture. ... So our perceptions of the world are not pure sense impressions of it. ...*

*Finally, our perceptions are influenced by our needs, interests and desires. ...*



C. Behan McCullagh



C. Behan McCullagh

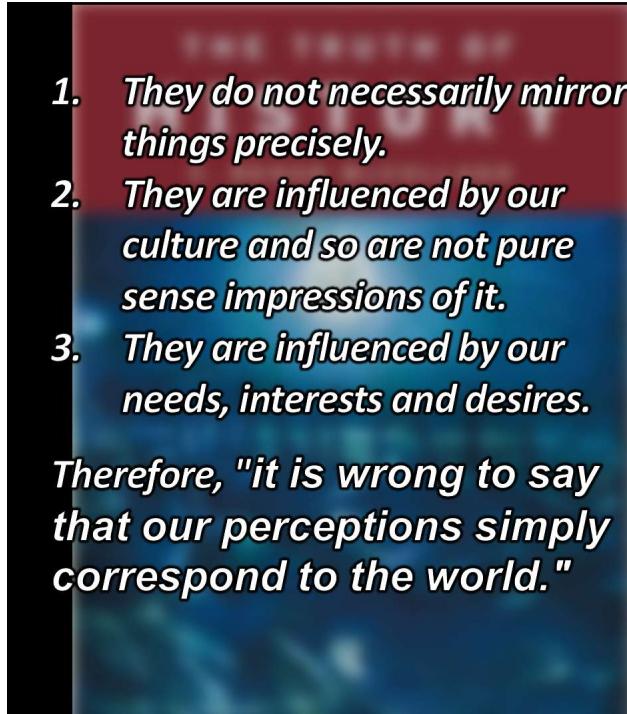
1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*



C. Behan McCullagh

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*
2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*
3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*



**Does McCullagh's observations about perceptions mirror the perceptions precisely?**

**If so, then he has contradicted himself.**

**If not, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?**

THE TRUTH OF

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*  
 2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*  
 3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

**Are McCullagh's observations about perceptions influenced by his culture?**

**If not, then he as contradicted himself.**

**If so, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?**

THE TRUTH OF

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*  
 2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*  
 3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

*Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."*

**Are McCullagh's observations about perceptions influenced by his needs, interests, and desires?**

**If not, then he as contradicted himself.**

**If so, then why should we think his observations are objectively true?**

THE TRUTH OF

1. *They do not necessarily mirror things precisely.*  
 2. *They are influenced by our culture and so are not pure sense impressions of it.*  
 3. *They are influenced by our needs, interests and desires.*

***Therefore, "it is wrong to say that our perceptions simply correspond to the world."***

***Do you see how self-refuting McCullagh's argument is?***

***If it is wrong to say that "our perceptions simply correspond to the world" then it would be wrong for McCullagh to say that his conclusion corresponds to the world since his conclusion is his perception about our observations.***

***But if McCullagh's conclusion does not correspond to the world, then his conclusion is false.***

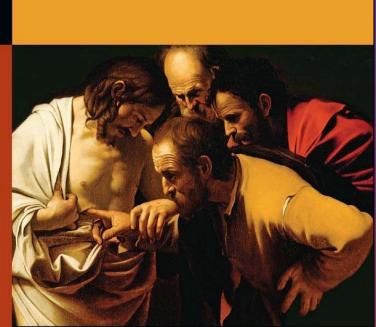


Carl A. Raschke

SPECTRUM  
RELIGIOUS BOOKS

With contributions by

Craig A. Boyd  
Alan G. Padgett  
Carl A. Raschke



**Faith and Reason**  
THREE VIEWS  
EDITED BY Steve Wilkens



Carl A. Raschke

***"It's up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse in which what was first written or spoken can be fleshed out. The 'truth' of a text can be discerned in its deployability within a particular set of life circumstances."***

[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 63, emphasis in original]



Carl A. Raschke

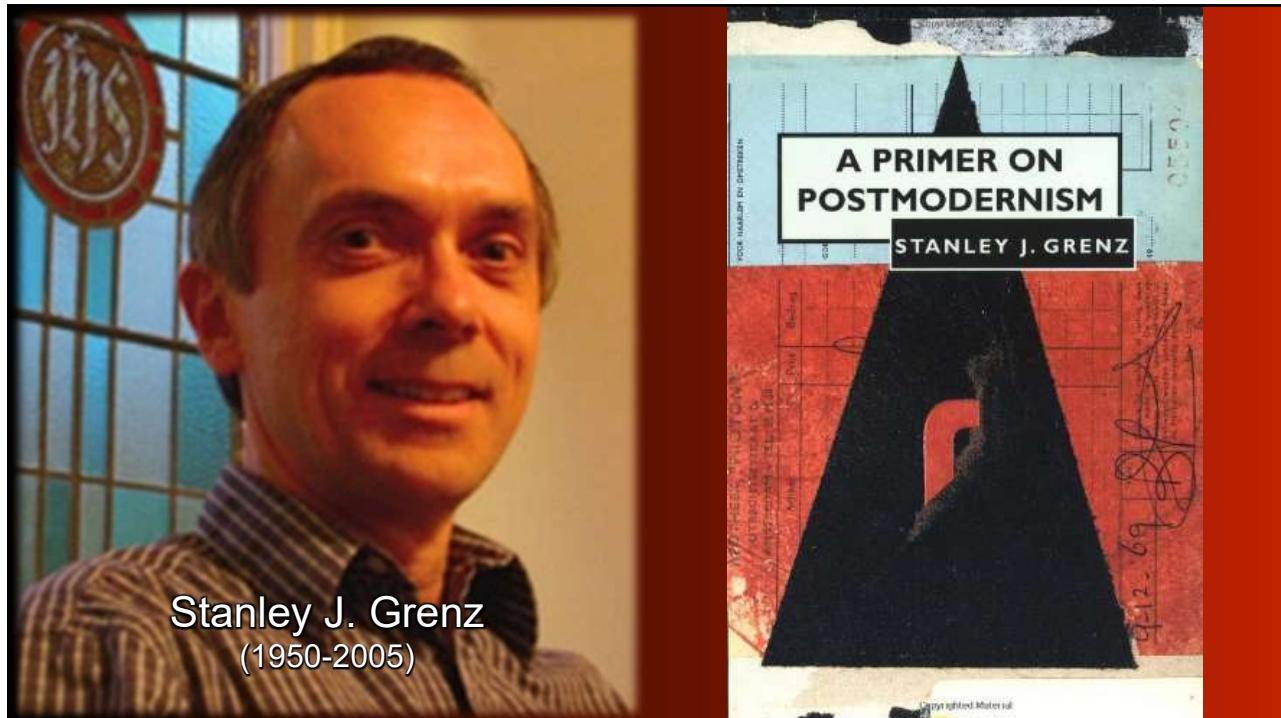
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If "it is up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse," then how are we to take the meaning Raschke was seeking to communicate through his statement here? If the interpreter provides a new framework, then why should we take Raschke's statement to be objectively true?



Stanley J. Grenz  
(1950-2005)

A photograph of Stanley J. Grenz, a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a striped shirt, smiling. He is standing in front of a window with a stained glass design featuring the letters 'IHS'. To the right is the cover of the book 'A PRIMER ON POSTMODERNISM' by Stanley J. Grenz. The cover is red and features a large, stylized black letter 'A' with a red 'P' inside it. The title and author's name are in white text on a black rectangular background.



Stanley J. Grenz  
(1950-2005)

*"In contrast to the modern ideal of the dispassionate observer, we affirm the postmodern discovery that no observer can stand outside the historical process. Nor can we gain universal, culturally neutral knowledge as unconditioned specialists.*



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*If what Grenz says is true, then his own statement itself does not come from an observer who stands "outside the historical process" and, thus, the statement is not itself "neutral knowledge" coming from an "unconditioned specialist."*

*Since this is the case, why should we believe that it is objectively true?*



*"On the contrary, we are participants in our historical and cultural context, and all our intellectual endeavors are unavoidably conditioned by that participation."*

[Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 166]



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**If "all our intellectual endeavors" are "unavoidably conditioned" then Grenz's own statement is itself "unavoidably conditioned."**

**But if his statement is "unavoidably conditioned," then why should we take it as objectively true?**



Dan McGee

Medium

**Truth and Postmodernism**

Dan M. - Follow 4 min read · Mar 29, 2017

I initially thought this was a [parody](#) of conservative thinking, but on second reading, I realized that it was a genuine (albeit likely willful) lack of understanding of postmodernist thinking. Thus, there are some critiques the discussants should consider.

First, postmodernism (and epistemology generally) distinguishes between subjective truths and objective truths. The former are statements about one's individual experience of the world, while the latter comprise propositions supported either inductively or deductively.

For example, the colour red contains both objective and subjective truths. Objectively, 'red' is the term given to light in the visible spectrum with wavelengths around 650 nm. However, seeing the colour is a subjective experience that happens within the brain of each observer. Thus, my experience of seeing red need not be identical to yours.

The discussants might still object to the existence of subjective truths, saying



Dan McGee

***"Postmodernism stresses the distinction between objectivity of facts, versus objectivity of knowledge or people. It accepts the possible existence of facts outside human context, but argues that all knowledge is mediated by an individual and that the experiences, biases, beliefs, and identity of that individual necessarily influence how they mediate any knowledge."***

[Dan McGee, "Truth and Postmodernism," downloaded from <https://medium.com/@danmcgee/truth-and-postmodernism-816ea9b3007a>, 02/14/25]



Dan McGee

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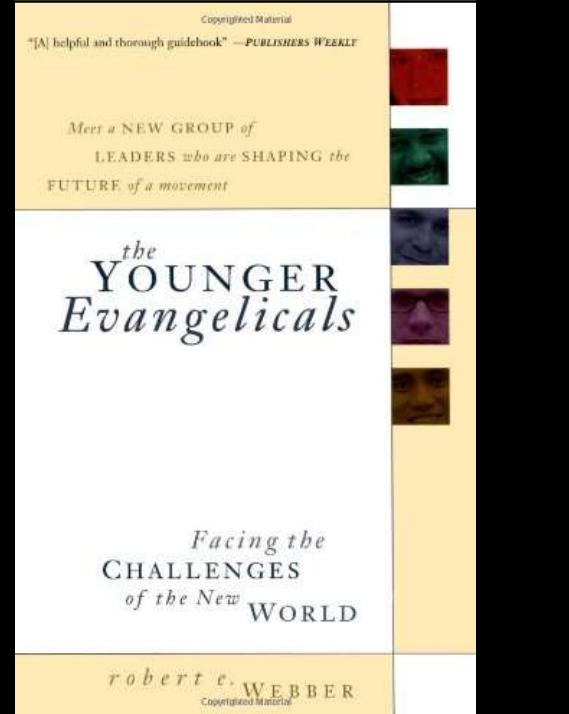
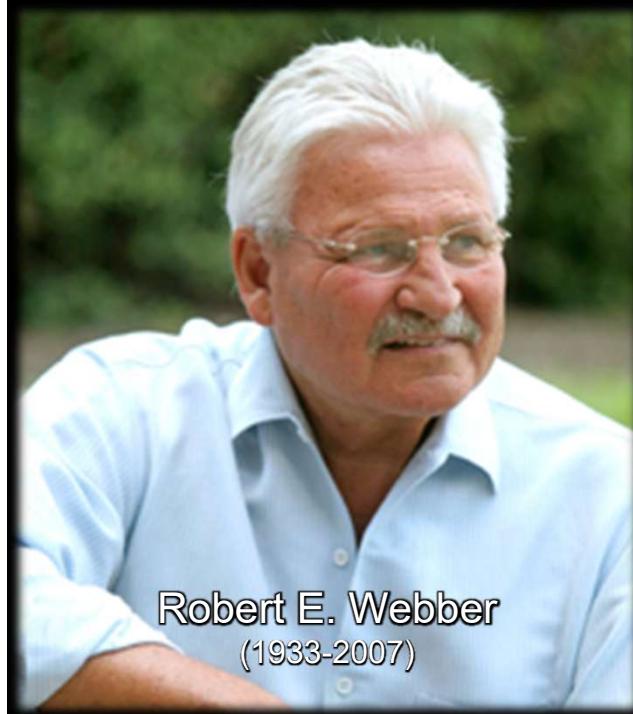
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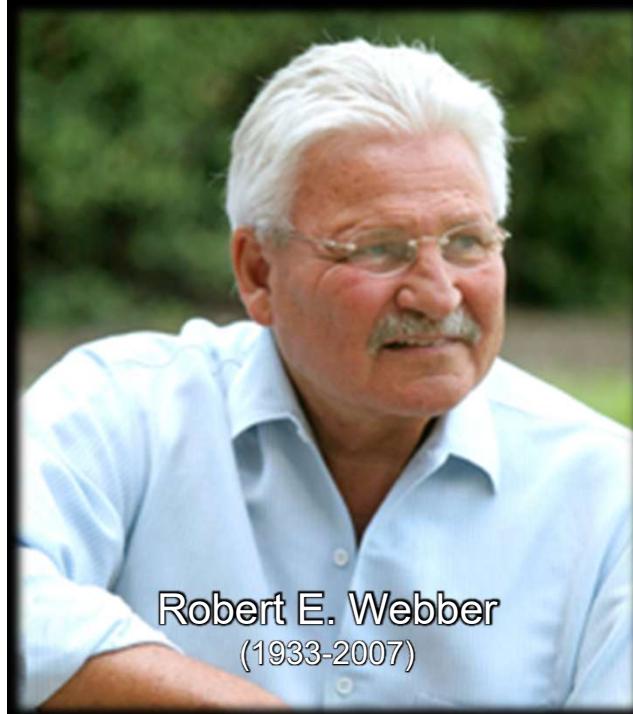
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*If "all knowledge is mediated" and the individual has "biases" that "necessarily influence how they mediate ANY knowledge" (emphasis added), then this would be true of Dan McGee and the knowledge claim he is making right here.*

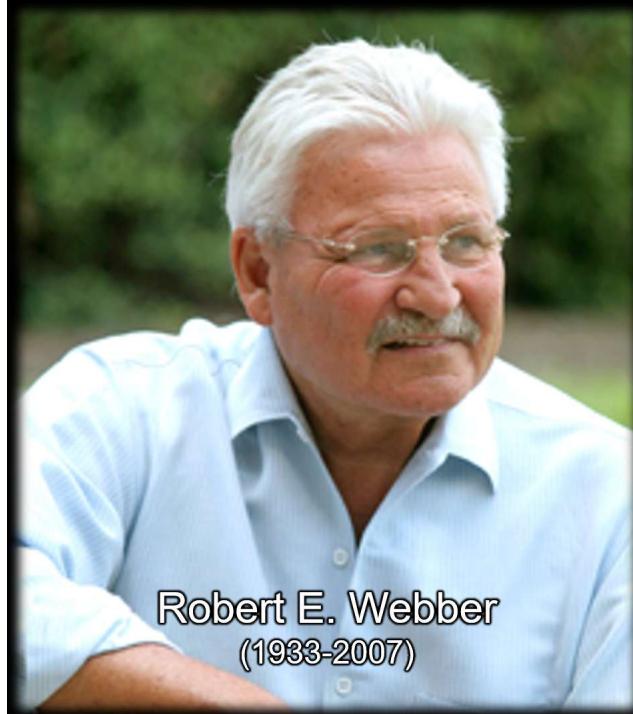
*But if this is true of Dan McGee's claim here, why should we take his claim to be objectively true?*





Robert E. Webber  
(1933-2007)

**"In the twenty-first century world ... the new attitude ... is that the use of reason and science to prove or disprove a fact is questionable. ...**



Robert E. Webber  
(1933-2007)

**"This ... points ... to the postmodern conclusion that we deal with 'interpreted facts.'"**

[Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 84]

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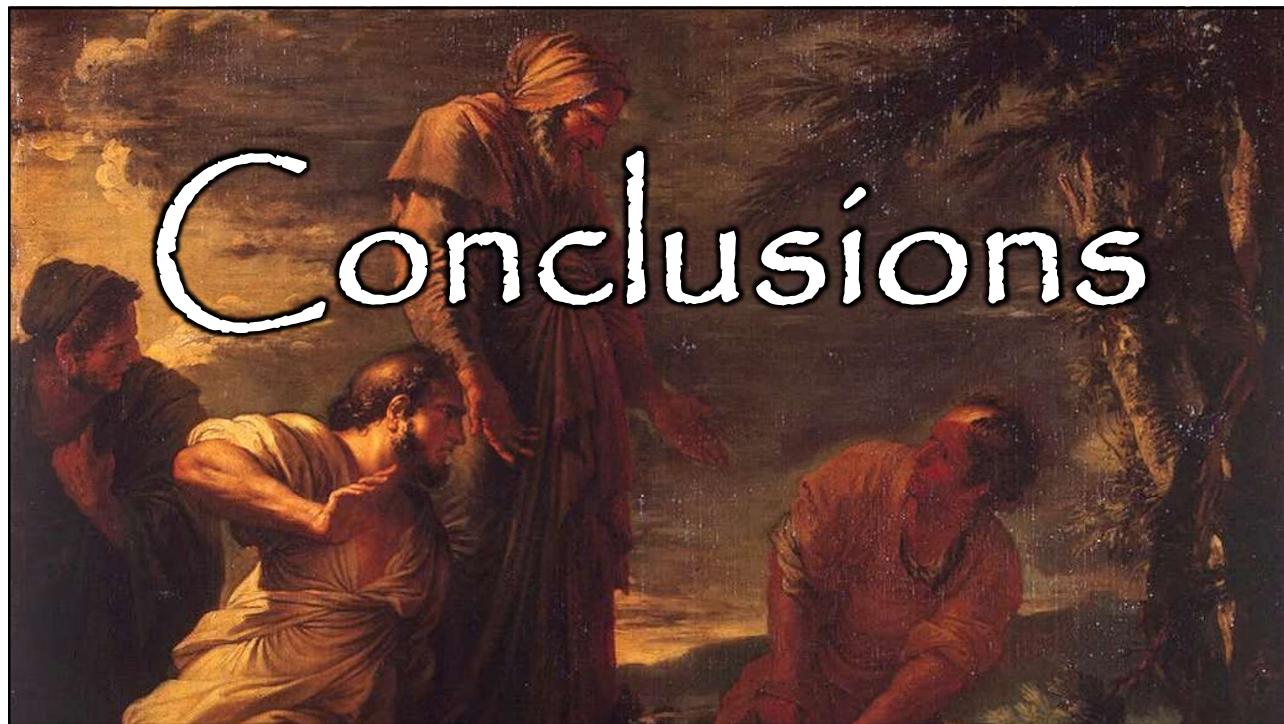
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*Again, if we deal with  
"interpreted facts," then  
what does that say about  
Webber's statement  
itself?*

*Is his claim here merely  
an "interpreted fact?"  
If so, then why should we  
take it as objectively  
true?*

***The fallacy of all  
these examples is ...***





# Conclusions

- ❖ ***Some things are subjective and "relative" to the individual.***
- ❖ ***But other things are objective and are the same for everyone.***
- ❖ ***The claims of Christianity purport to be objective claims about reality.***
- ❖ ***While Christianity shares some truths with other religions, the core, defining truths of Christianity make it unique.***
- ❖ ***It is self-refuting to say that we cannot speak or write objective truths.***
- ❖ ***Thus, the skeptic cannot claim that it is impossible to get objective truths from its text.***