

NUMBERS & COMPASSION

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | NOVEMBER 22, 2020



The State of Theology Discussion Q & A

PURPOSE: To see how we can relate to -and even evangelize- others according to biblical wisdom.



The State of Theology

I. Need for Q & A

The secularization that America has largely avoided in the past century is alive in the institutions of higher learning and has finally been unleashed on the nation through many successive generations of students who have had their worldview shaped by the secular, intellectual elites. Thus the intellectual conditions of America are qualitatively and quantitatively different from those that prevailed in this culture just twenty years ago. The storm of secular thought, which has inundated the nations of Europe, has now spread over the Atlantic. We can now see the effects on our society with revolutions in morality, ethics, and the total worldview on the horizon.

The American and European thinkers who first tried to understand what was happening thought of religion's decline -Christianity specifically- as a process that the modern age would unleash automatically. To be modern would be to abandon belief in God. The old Christian morality would melt away and a new secular morality, including a new sexual morality, would replace it.

But as it happened, the hard atheism and agnosticism that marked the intellectual and political elites was not followed by the general population. Instead, what happened among the millennials was the advance of a great religious indifference. In the words of Steven Carter, a law professor at Yale University, God became a hobby with fewer and fewer serious hobbyists.

-Albert Mohler, *The Gathering Storm*, p. 6 [also transcript from podcast]

II. Four Survey Questions Worth Revisiting

A. Question #3: God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

- Among Evangelicals – 20 percent agree.
- Among Catholics – 82 percent agree.
- Among All Americans – 76 percent agree.

How *the State of Theology* responds “False” on this question:

God tells us that we “shall have no other gods” before Him, and He commands us to keep ourselves from idols, which include deities that are not the one true God revealed in the Bible (Ex. 20:3; 1 John 5:21). He is against false prophets and the worship of false gods, and He commands all people to repent and to trust in Christ in order to escape His judgment (Jer. 18:15; Ezek. 13:9; Acts 17:29–31). God does not accept any worship unless it is offered in spirit and truth, which is worship that approaches the one true God through Christ the Mediator (John 4:24; 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25), so God does not accept the worship of all religions but accepts only the worship offered in Christianity.

B. Question #7: Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.

- Among Evangelicals – 14 percent agree.
- Among Catholics – 57 percent agree.
- Among All Americans – 70 percent agree.

How *the State of Theology* responds “False” on this question:

Jesus was certainly a great teacher (Matt. 7:28–29; Luke 2:47; 4:32. He was, however, also truly God (Luke 22:70; John 1:1; 10:30; Col. 2:9).

C. Question #11: Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.

- Among Evangelicals – 32 percent agree.
- Among Catholics – 77 percent agree.
- Among All Americans – 72 percent agree.

How *the State of Theology* responds “False” on this question:

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, human beings (except Jesus Christ) have been born into sin. According to God’s perfect standard, “none is righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:9–18), and apart from God’s grace, the intentions of our hearts are evil from our youth and our thoughts are evil continually because we do not seek the glory of God (Gen. 6:5; 8:21).

D. Question #27: Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin.

- Among Evangelicals – 4 percent disagree.
- Among Catholics – 40 percent disagree.
- Among All Americans – 49 percent disagree.

How *the State of Theology* responds “True” on this question:

In the beginning, God established marriage between one man and one woman as the only legitimate context for coming together as one flesh in both a sexual and emotional union (Gen. 2:18–25). Traditional marriage and celibacy are the only divinely approved alternatives to sexual immorality, so all sexual activity outside of traditional marriage is a sin (1 Cor. 7).

III. Questions from the Floor