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Stephen Prothero

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Stephen Prothero : God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. faiths are founded in differenceBy C. D. VarnA quick guide to eight of the major world religions which focuses on the key differences in the worldview of the various religions. While none of the sections are comprehensive, I felt like I got truly new information about African traditions and their

influence on fringe religious movements in the Americas. While basic, in our age of religious and cultural illiteracy, this is a good introductory take on comparative religion that does not search for facts that make world religions seem ethically homogenous. That ecumenicism may make sense to encourage religious tolerance, but it is in the differences between religions that the context for world cultures starts to be made clear. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Human Flourishing: It may be the goal, but each path is certainly different. By Carter Brothers Fascinating discussion of the world's religions. I found his decision to focus on the questions "What does this religion see as our main problem and how is that problem solved (either by God(s) or by us or by both)?" to be an excellent way to frame each religion and really help illustrate the differences. I had only a passing knowledge of many of the religions discussed in the book and really enjoyed finding out more about them. I found his main thesis (that all religions are really not one) to be persuasively argued and supported, especially when focusing on this question of "what problem does this religion attempt to solve?" I read it on Kindle so I had trouble going back to compare. Would have been nice to have a summary at the end of the book to remind me of the differences. I'm guessing there must be a study guide somewhere that has this sort of chart/information. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great book on religions as a whole By Frank Denman I highly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in religions, but I especially recommend it to anyone who has a hatred of any religion or anyone who thinks that their religion is the "one true religion". Atheists and Christians alike should check this one out. This book debunks the common misconception that "all religions are different paths leading to the same place". The author does his best to remain unbiased and does not place any one religion as more "right" than any other. Stephen Prothero's simple, easy to read, matter of fact approach simply seeks to inform readers about the goals and solutions of the top eight religions of the world, while at the same time acknowledging that there are good and bad things that come from religion. Overall, I think this book helps to promote understanding about religions as a whole and as a result promotes religious tolerance.

In God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World, New York Times bestselling author of *Religious Literacy* and religion scholar Stephen Prothero argues that persistent attempts to portray all religions as different paths to the same God overlook the distinct problem that each tradition seeks to solve. Delving into the different problems and solutions that Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Yoruba Religion, Daoism and Atheism strive to combat, *God is Not One* is an indispensable guide to the questions human beings have asked for millennia and to the disparate paths we are taking to answer them today. Readers of Huston Smith and Karen Armstrong will find much to ponder in *God is Not One*.

.com Exclusive: A Letter from Stephen Prothero On my last visit to Jerusalem, I struck up a conversation with an elderly man in the Muslim Quarter. As a shopkeeper, he seemed keen to sell me jewelry. As a Sufi mystic, he seemed even keener to engage me in matters of the spirit. He told me that religions are human inventions, so we must avoid the temptation of worshipping Islam rather than Allah. What matters is opening yourself up to the mystery that goes by the word God, and that can be done in any religion. As he tempted me with more turquoise and silver, he asked me what I was doing in Jerusalem. When I told him I was researching a book on the world's religions, he put down the jewelry, looked at me intently, and, placing a finger on my chest for emphasis, said, "Do not write false things about the religions." As I wrote *God is Not One*, I came back repeatedly to this conversation. I never wavered from trying to write true things, but I knew that some of the things I was writing he would consider false. Mystics often claim that the great religions differ only in the inessentials. They may be different paths but they are ascending the same mountain and they converge at the peak. Throughout this book I give voice to these mystics: the Daoist sage Laozi, who wrote his classic the *Daodejing* just before disappearing forever into the mountains; the Sufi poet Rumi, who instructs us to "gamble everything for love"; and the Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, who revels in the feminine aspects of God. But my focus is not on these spiritual superstars. It is on ordinary religious folk—the stories they tell, the doctrines they affirm, and the rituals they practice. And these stories, doctrines, and rituals could not be more different. Christians do not go on the hajj to Mecca; Jews do not affirm the doctrine of the Trinity; and neither Buddhists nor Hindus trouble themselves about sin or salvation. Of course, religious differences trouble us, since they seem to portend, if not war itself, then at least rumors thereof. But as I researched and wrote this book I came to appreciate how opening our eyes to religious differences can help us appreciate the unique beauty of each of the great religions--the radical freedom of the Daoist wanderer, the contemplative way into death of the Buddhist monk, and the joy in the face of the divine life of the Sufi shopkeeper. I plan to send my Sufi shopkeeper a copy of this book. I have no doubt he will disagree with parts of it. But I hope he will recognize my effort to avoid writing "false things," even when I disagree with friends. --Stephen Prothero From *Publishers Weekly* Expressing his astonishment, Prothero (*Religious Literacy*) arrives late at the party that has been celebrating for years the diversity and plurality of the world's religions. Although he is correct in asserting that an entire generation of scholars, teachers, and interested readers have claimed in the interest of religious tolerance that the world's religions were simply different paths to the same one God, such a claim functions as little more than a red herring in what is otherwise a useful introduction to the world's religions. Once past that assertion, Prothero sets up a helpful model for examining each religion on its own terms: he explores a

problem that dominates the religion, the religion's solution to the problem, the technique the religion uses to move from problem to solution, and the exemplar who charts a path from problem to solution. For example, in Buddhism the problem is suffering; the solution is nirvana; the technique is the Noble Eightfold Path; and the exemplars are the arhats, bodhisattvas, and lamas. Despite his naiveté about contemporary interreligious dialogue, Prothero's survey is a useful introduction to eight of the world's great religions. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Prothero vehemently disagrees with the politically correct notion that all religions are equal. This is a lovely sentiment, but it is dangerous, disrespectful, and untrue. The idea of religious unity, he maintains, is nothing but wishful thinking. Hence, this book is meant to be a most definitely a bracing dose of realism. Religion is not just a private matter, he continues. Rather, it affects the world from social, economic, political, and military perspectives. Religion has two faces as a force of both good and evil. He discusses what he considers the great religions of the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), India (Hinduism and Buddhism), and East Asia (Confucianism and Daoism) great in this context being contingent on number of adherents and historical significance. As the eighth religion of the subtitle, Prothero includes which may surprise some the Yoruba religion of West Africa and its vast diaspora. There is also a brief chapter on atheism. Provocative, thoughtful, fiercely intelligent and, for both believing and nonbelieving, formal and informal students of religion, a must-read. --June Sawyers