

*Grand Central Question:
Answering the Critical Concerns
of the Major Worldviews*
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All religions and worldviews seek to answer the fundamental questions of human existence: Why am I here? What does it mean to be human? Why is there evil in the world and how do we deal with it? But not every worldview places equal emphasis on each issue. The main worldviews each tend to stress a different central question. Abdu Murray digs deeply into atheism, pantheism and a prominent proponent of theism, Islam, comparing each to the central message of Jesus.

A Worldview that Views the Whole World

Our questions are as numerous as we are. I've learned very well from speaking engagements and personal encounters all over the world that there are no shortages of questions. But the Grand Central Questions – the questions around which all others orbit – are far fewer because we share them regardless of our backgrounds. What I've tried to demonstrate in the preceding pages is that the gospel answers the major worldviews' Grand Central Questions in ways that validate those questions while providing the true answers in the gospel.

The gospel affirms secular humanists' effort to understand the intrinsic value of each human being so that we can look to a brighter future. But that value can be found only in the transcendent God who places value in us. The gospel is the destination for humanists' search. Pantheists valiantly seek the path that meaningfully deals with suffering and pain, but the path that treats life and pain as illusions leads nowhere. The gospels' stark realism about the world's brutality, our role in it and the divine solution to our very real problem is where the path ends. And the gospel encourages Muslims' passion to worship God as the Greatest Possible Being. But the very doctrines that Muslims reject are the same doctrines that demonstrate God's greatness. That is a profound beauty of the gospel. It affirms the questions we all have, yet provides exclusive and wise answers in ways that touch the heart and stir the mind.

But I'm also convinced that the gospel does more than answer the major worldviews' Grand Central Questions. While each worldview has its own Grand Central Question, every person has one, unified Grand Central Question: *what does it all mean?* We are all looking for *the* answer. Perhaps we even capitalize the word, like so many bumper stickers I've seen that spout off platitudes like "Love is the Answer," "Tolerance is the Answer" or even "Jesus is the Answer."

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, as the title character runs across the United States (several times), he attracts quite a following. One man runs up alongside him and says that when he saw a news report about what Forrest was doing, a light went off in his head. He suddenly realized that Forrest had "the Answer." It's ironic that Forrest supposedly had *the* answer while running back and forth along different roads. The oft-repeated, bumper-sticker-worthy cliché of the pluralist is "All roads lead up the mountain," suggesting that all the roads we pick to reach God are equally valid and reliable.

But I think this has reality a bit backward. Each worldview's Grand Central Question is itself a mountain standing in the path toward the ultimate destination. The fact that every worldview answers those questions so differently should tell us that they do not all get us over the mountains. Some roads can lead us right off a cliff. There are not many roads up the

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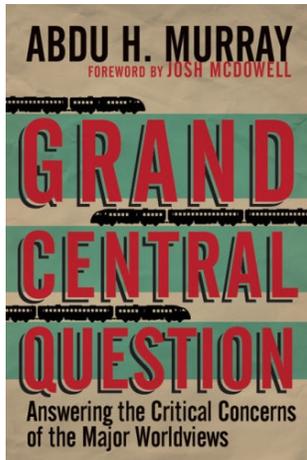
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BOOK EXCERPT

one mountain; there are many mountains along the one correct road to the ultimate destination. I'm firmly convinced that the gospel's answers to each of the Grand Central Questions we've addressed shows it to be the right road.

– Taken from the Epilogue



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Abdu H. Murray is president of Embrace the Truth International and also visiting professor of Christian thought and apologetics for the Josh McDowell Institute at Oklahoma Wesleyan University. He has spoken across the United States and around the world, and has been a featured guest on numerous national and international television and radio programs. Murray is the author of *Apocalypse Later* and a contributor to a number of books on apologetics and missiology.

High Praise for *Grand Central Question*

"Abdu Murray's *Grand Central Question* is a practical, powerful guide to the explanatory value of the Christian faith, both intellectually and practically. This book contains helpful personal illustrations, very telling quotations, and real-life dialogues with Muslims, atheists and advocates of other worldviews that will make us wiser in proclaiming and defending the gospel of Christ."

—Paul Copan, professor and Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University

"*Grand Central Question* is fantastic! I am so impressed at both the personal experience and depth of study that Abdu brings to the table. He takes the biggest life questions and provides insightful, provocative answers. I am thrilled and honored to endorse a book that will equip and challenge so many people."

—Sean McDowell, speaker, educator and author of *Is God Just a Human Invention?*

"An attorney by training, Abdu Murray keenly recognizes, as Jesus' own ministry unveiled, that often there is a deeper question and motive behind a question, and 'until the heart is open, the ears remain closed.' He soberly reminds us that truth is costly — and sometimes it costs us dearly, as Abdu's own journey reveals. Here you will find a wise and gentle voice who truly understands the doubter and skeptic. Abdu has wrestled with the claims of truth made by many worldviews and shows how the gospel is utterly unique and beautiful. I enthusiastically recommend his work."

—Ravi Zacharias, author and speaker

"Outstanding! My friend Abdu Murray, an attorney and former Muslim, uses his razor-sharp intellect to analyze the big questions addressed by various worldviews — and explains why Christianity offers the most satisfying answers. Written with compassion and keen insight, this book will both equip Christians and bring clarity to the spiritually curious."

—Lee Strobel, professor of Christian Thought, Houston Baptist University, and author of *The Case for Christ*

"Everyone in the world knows something is wrong and in need of fixing. Abdu Murray's stirring account of his conversion from Islam to Christianity, and his earnest engagement with people of other worldviews, will help you quickly identify the pressing questions each worldview is attempting to answer and see how Christ is the one true answer."

—Jeff Myers, president, Summit Ministries

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