

## One religion as good as another?

When a religion ends up failing to connect to another religion or even attacks it the notion that one religion is as good as another seems not to be grounded in the real world. It maintains that if religions disagree they cannot really mean what they say for they are all the same or as good as the same. Those who maintain that then must have a magic infallibility or clairvoyance. It is intolerant to tell people they cannot possibly mean what they say.

A lot of those who say one religion is as good as another really mean one person with a religious opinion is as good as somebody with the complete opposite opinion. This is just the "What matters is not what is right or true but what is right or true for me. It is my truth that matters." Faith in God is just a way of doing that very thing for you make a god out of your opinions. It protects "your truth" from being unmasked. God cannot be unmasked the same way as you can unmask, "My truth is that antibiotics do not work." The "My truth is mine and nobody else's" kind of attitude is self-centredness on steroids. You may not act like a narcissist but that is what you are and your narcissism is of a type that does not need to impact on anything outside you. When the my truth brigade sleep around and wreak havoc the problem is their belief not what they do. The ones that don't do those things cannot be praised for it just happened that their belief did not send them in that direction. There is no moral superiority.

Is one religion as good as another? It is considered tolerant to answer yes. Society is afraid of religion causing a nuclear war. Religion caused plenty of trouble in the past and still causes trouble today. If the claim that it does not matter what religion you belong to is a lie, then it is a shoddy way to promote world peace. True tolerance looks at problems without trying to turn saccharine.

Many religions have doctrinal and moral overlaps. For example, Jews and Christians believe that there is one God. And both Mormons and pagans believe there are many gods. All those faiths hold that cheating on your wife or husband is wrong. The overlaps are presented as evidence that religions are really all the same and just look different. They may overlap a fair bit on moral matters but there will be many divergences and contradictions. For example, some religions allow wifebeating and others do not. Some religions have more moral issues that they agree on than other religions would. Moral rules serve a need so you would expect a lot of agreement between people of religion and of no religion. But religion seems to weaken or destroy this agreement that should be there. The doctrinal overlaps are a worse problem. They are very small.

The notion that many religions have largely the same moral values is a superficial notion. A Catholic values fidelity in marriage. So does the Muslim. Their values may look the same they are not. The Catholic sees fidelity as a Catholic value not as a Muslim one. The Muslim one sees it as a Muslim value not a Catholic one.

Catholics teach the notion of natural law - that God has written the rules about how to treat each other in our hearts. So it follows from this view that Christians do not have a monopoly on working out right from wrong.

Good people in a religion does not tell us much about the faith endorsed by that religion. It would be wrong to imagine that only a good or fine belief system can produce these great people. Sometimes it makes sense to judge it by the character of those who believe in it. But do they really believe? It is easy for a person to think they believe when they actually do not. Sometimes it is wrong to judge the religion by the character of the people who believe in it. Many people rise above the oppressive and nasty belief system they have converted to or been born into. You can meet a charming kindly Nazi who would not hurt a fly but who would not mind their organisation or ideology persecuting others. He supports an evil belief system and that does the evil for him. We tend to prefer to get others or to enable others to do harm for us. Think of how the mothers of Ireland refused to protect their children and the children of others from rapist priests.

Most religion is, and most religious people are, intolerant of ignorance but tolerant of religious ignorance. Too many welcome and accept the ignorance involved in religion. Sometimes their excuse is that religion does not harm. Ignorance always does harm - at the very least it is attempting to keep people away from their right to know and make informed decisions. When that right is dispensed with, others soon follow it down the toilet. Another excuse is that raising the problems about religion causes offence to believers. In other words, "We refuse to be offended by religion. That way we will say nothing critical about it. We do this so that religious people will not be offended." Why should you be the one that won't be offended?

The real reason people are tolerant of religious ignorance is that they think religious people are vicious when the truth of what their faith claims is questioned. To be tolerant of religious ignorance then is feeding the perceived problem of religious bigotry. It is not real tolerance after all. It is giving intolerance a B12 jab.

People fear the danger of religion when they pressure the world to regard one religion as good as another. They like to say that religions all say the same thing at the core and its only in the detail that there are differences or contradictions between religions. Or they may say there is only one religion and that it has different styles. So Christianity is the same as Hinduism etc. Just the presentation is different. It is like how one coffee shop is furnished different from the next one.

The irrational belief that the religions all agree arises out of fear. The supporters of that belief know fine well that having different religions is often dangerous. They fear that when religions are at peace, this peace is really tolerance or cosmetic peace. Their notion that all religions are the same at heart is intolerant of religions that deny this. The only way all religions are one is in their supposition that the supernatural exists. And it is not always agreed that bodies called religions really are religions. Buddhism in many forms is not a religion.

The supporters of our equality and sameness of religion rubbish are turning a blind eye to the huge differences between religions. They fear religion and think that by ignoring this fear that the problems and dangers will go away.

How could the Catholic sect the Society of St Pius X which forbids attendance at any Masses but its own be as good as a form of Catholicism that is not that narrow? How could it be respectful to it to say it is as good as any other religion or faith or sect when that insults its own prime doctrine that it is the only body of doctrine approved by God?

How could Catholicism centred on the Holy Mass be as good as say Witchcraft?

How could Buddhism with its atheism agree with Evangelical Fundamentalist Christianity?

If you are Christian and disgusted and enraged when you hear of the terrible things Allah has commanded and what God commanded people to do in the Old Testament does not bother you then you are a fundamentalist hypocrite. You are warped. If you praise Jesus for violating his temple and go purple in the face when somebody smashes a pane in your local Church you are a bigot and a paragon of self serving selective justice. Saying one religion is as good as another is rooted not in honesty or sincerity but in fear of religion or dodgy religion. By sweetening religion you hope the problem it represents will go away. When question and challenged people will be led to see that they do not treat or think of all religions as marvellous or equally wonderful.

The Roman Catholic Church as a faith has deceived the people and especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. There is no such thing as a good Catholic. No. What is called a good Catholic is a good human being who has the Catholic label. The point is that it is people who are good - not religions. It is people who make up charities that look after the poor not charities. Same principle!

To cover up the differences in religion in the name of peace, is admitting that religion is trouble. It only makes a laughing stock of real peace-making efforts. It insinuates that those who admit there are differences and that one religion may do more harm than another are bigots and intolerant. Sensible people have to suffer because some politically correct fools want to equalise religions and promote their own brand of intolerance.