

REVIEW: A NEW EARTH AN OLD DECEPTION BY RICHARD ABANES

Richard Abanes, founder and director of the Religious Information Center of Southern California, has had decades of experience in writing about and investigating religious and social issues. Abanes likes to assess the interaction between social matters and religion. The repeated abuse this man has received in Amazon reviews of his book on Tolle, A New Earth, An Old Deception from Tolle's fans is telling. You see accusations against him of being judgemental from those who need a good look at themselves. The book is Bible based but uses good sense as well to refute Tolle. The critics never try to deal with how reason is on Abanes' side in some of the things he says.

He quotes Tolle:

Many 'religious' people - equate truth with thought, and as they are completely identified with thought - claim to be in sole possession of the truth in an unconscious attempt to protect their identity.

COMMENT: As Abanes says, this is an intolerant slap against religions that take themselves seriously. Yet Tolle and the humanity group think they are in sole possession of the truth that no religion is true! Tolle himself as the book says claims to be about the one absolute truth. "There is only one absolute Truth." Tolle is bigoted for if there is a true religion then statements like "If you believe only your religion is the Truth, you are using it in the service of the ego." So here religion is only good if it does not take itself seriously but takes Tolle's brand of religion or pseudo-religion seriously! It thinks that truth religions are dangerous. When was the last time a Christadelphian burned down a church to persecute those who did not agree with him or her?

Tolle told Oprah that we are not spirit and that is an ego idea or selfish. We are some kind of ineffable space in his view.

MY COMMENT: True but not for the reasons he says. He is assuming you have to imagine you are an illusion as if thinking you are real automatically makes you an egotist. That is very cynical.

If I believe I exist as a bodily being and that makes me egotistical imagine what will happen if I add a new idea, that I am distinct spiritual being as well? Not only am I human but I am also a soul that can live apart from the body.

Tolle distorts "Love your neighbour as yourself" to mean that you are your neighbour thus in intending to love him you love yourself.

Abanes says it turns the other person into an illusion.

My comment is that your neighbour is not you so if you love him because you think he is you then you are not loving him. If you cannot do any good for another person unless you see them as another you then who is the egotist? I would warn that it is possible to reject the idea of Ann and Mary and Pat all being one person as silly and yet act as if you do believe it. That is why if altruism is possible, it is impossible to know if anybody is altruist or if it ever happens.

The book points out how Tolle redefines forgiveness. You see yourself as one with the person who hurt you and that shows you you are not a victim who needs to judge the person. Real forgiveness is the realising you have hurt yourself for you are the enemy who hurt you. Abanes answers, "The problem lies within our sin nature, which causes us to sin. And that in turn brings suffering on oneself and others." The sin nature doctrine is taught by Christianity but the religion insists it should not be seen as a purely religious statement for it says you don't need the Bible or a religion to tell you that we sin because we are sinners in the same way that a dog barks because it is a dog. If the teaching is true, then Tolle is blinding people to their true nature and a problem that is hidden, if you cannot see you have a bad nature, then it will only get worse.

The book shows how Tolle wants to be in the present for his past is full of pain and he worries what the future might bring. This leads Tolle to advise not thinking at all so that you can be in the present. He calls that presence.

That to me is blaming our nature as thinking beings for all the problems of life. This is too negative. It is an attack on what we are as human beings. Its a form of dehumanisation.

Tolle goes, "If evil has any reality - and it has a relative, not an absolute, reality - this is also its definition".

This means that child killings such as the Moors Murders were not really evil and the problem is us seeing them as evil. The perceptions of them as evil is based on illusion and is the real evil. It accuses Islam and Christianity of being inherently

evil for they insist on these things being objectively evil and good-free.

Tolle as Abanes says, does not shy away from saying that all the suffering and terrorism in the world is a game. It is, "The game that they created for themselves to play". He rightly describes this as cold-hearted New Age doctrine which blames the victim.

This is the kind of stuff the critics of Abanes don't want to think about. Tolle is borrowing from pagan religions like Hinduism and ignoring or not caring about the damage those kinds of doctrines can do.