

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS THAT DENY THAT RELIGION IS NECESSARILY GOOD

Decency, not to mention Christianity, says you must not look for praise for any good you do but as far as possible try to keep it secret. If individuals should not court adulation and honour then neither should the religion as a whole for it is a collection of individuals. Thus the religion has no right to use the good deeds and sufferings of its martyrs or anyone to get praise even in the sense, "They, those comprising the religion, are not all bad." That is abusing the good done to get social leverage, and consequently political leverage, and to silence those who say that there is enough problematic with religion to justify dismantling it.

John Donne said that in some sense we are all owners of our race. We somehow belong to each other. He put it this way, "No man is an island - any man's death diminishes me." You can say that of religion too. The religionists in a religion are diminished by the wrongdoing of some religionists. This goes with the idea that the latter should be thinking they have no right to damage or belittle the others instead of doing the bad things.

Action

Action alone is criteria for a religion is good or the best or otherwise. Doctrine is not a test for anybody other than yourself for it can be insincere and usually is. That is why religion must take the blame if members do wrong for it is unfair to keep it all about the good side.

Good v evil?

Good versus evil is the narrative that drives respect for religion and the refusal to see that it is not as good as it wants you to think. Or as useful! The good versus evil polarises the two so you forget this is not about good versus evil but about grey or undefined or unclear versus grey or undefined or unclear. Its an effective trick for it makes it about one or the other and that is useful for driving society into polarised good and bad people. Religion tries to look not bad so it will be classed as good. That is how simplistic it gets.

The good can be in conflict with itself. Two values can be vying each one as seemingly good as the other. The good person can be in conflict with himself or herself for good intentions can lead you astray so you don't know what course to take. If we care about good this will be very frightening and painful. It seems that human nature has the same values to some degree and if we search hard enough we will find unity at that level. Many say that is not true simply because the good though real is not the same in everybody's life. It is not good for a cancer free society to have good therapy for cancer. It belongs with those who need it. All we can say is that human nature has needs that need looking after but that is very vague and does not grant us a unified view of human nature and its values.

So if religion is good that admits that it is a cause of conflict for battles between good and evil really amount largely to battles between one good and another. Values conflict and that leads to conflict.

The whole is greater than the part

Religion is a whole and the member is a part. Being a member of the religion means you subscribe to it and also create it for without members there would be no religion. The whole is greater than the part which is why a member cherry-picking doctrine is silly. The credibility is going to run out. If you think a religion should affirm abortion rights or LGBT sex then start a new one and don't be damaging the LGBT cause by acting like a parasite.

Each religion says the member must mirror the wider religion. So a religion is a collection of mirrors reflecting all the religious principles. For that reason the doctrine reflects on you even if you did not set it. Bad doctrine then damages everybody in the religion and is connected to them.

The whole being greater than the part is not just about religion NOW but religion ENTIRETY. It is about the religion since it came into existence not just its current balance sheet.

Unit

Religion not only teaches doctrine but is doctrine. It is the doctrine that religion is not a collection of individuals. If it is that is not what is religiously important. It is a unit. It is a unit that represents doctrine even if it does not mention doctrine or forgets it.

A religion that is a collection of individuals by default has to deny that it is anything other than as good or bad as its

members are. So if it has some wife-batterers it cannot claim to be unaffected and still as pure as snow. A religion needs to be considered as a unit not as a collection of individuals for it is not a mere collection but a unit. That is why a religion's violent past especially when it had no answer to nobody bigger than itself reflects what we can expect of it maybe one day again. The tendency to religious violence has to appear in at least some individuals for the fact is the religion as a unit is tarnished and bloodstained. It has to have an effect however hard it is to find the effect.

Religion messes around with the definition of religion when critics point to it being dangerous. This is because bad deeds can be dismissed as anti-religious when the doers of the deeds claim to be doing them for spiritual/religious reasons. The meaning of religion is made vague so that people doubt that the evil actions can be linked to the religion and its brand of faith. They don't know exactly what to link it to.

If the religious doers of evil things in the name of the religion are just liars then why do they spend so much time and energy and conviction on portraying something as religious if it is not? That does not make sense.

Religion absorbs morality with its ideas of faith and love and justice. But morality is hard to apply and everybody has moral disagreements about the best things to do all the time. So this problem with morality helps cloak religion in vagueness too. The vagueness gives religion a way to dodge the blame and responsibility for what evil members do in its name and in the name of its God. It tries to deflect the blame and responsibility on those who serve it with violence. Religion does not disown those who serve it with lies and other misdeeds so it should own the rabidly violent too.

Those who refuse to see the bad side of a religion or how a religion can be a big force for bad as it can for good or even be bad instead of good are not talking about religion. The doctrine is against them.

The argument is patronising hypocrisy

The argument that religion is good or okay as long as not all in it are bad is insulting religion for implies it is only about the good it does not its being a religion. It is insulting to say Christian theology and worship to take such a stance. It is not respecting religion as religion. Real respect means admitting the truth warts and all. "Some not all" does not matter, and is irrelevant, if the entity is not supportive of truth or in tune with it.

The political world needs the argument as ignorant as it is for it manipulates religion to get good works out of it. Religion will run schools for the state and the state saves money and does not care that the religion is doing it out of a wish to spread its memes and indoctrinate children.

Religion gives it so it must take it!

The not all bad is not applied when it comes to at least one other religion. You and your religion are not willing to be thought of like that but you should be when you are willing to do it to another. Christianity left Judaism instead of reasoning, "There are good Jews so we must stay in." It did not reason that way at all and considered a new community necessary.

Christianity is based on the assumption that some sets of sinners are always doing wrong when they engage in some specific sin. For example, taking what does not belong to you is not a sin if you are starving to death but you must never have sex outside marriage. You may be exempted from Sunday worship which is normally obligatory but you are never exempted from the duty to encourage others to repent their sins. A faith that rejects, "Not all bad", in such cases in fairness has to ask us to maybe reject it in relation to itself.

Anyway "not all bad" is out for Christianity because,

The religion teaches that we are conceived tainted with sin. Adam sinned and we sinned in him. Whatever sinning in Adam means it means at the very least the Hebrew concept of corporate solidarity. This in no way need imply we are to blame for what Adam did. It could but usually it is taken to argue we are not personally responsible but in some other way that is just as bad we are responsible.

It says that all people without exception are sinners

It says that it is never good for people to have sex outside marriage between a man and a woman

Never good to reject belief in God

Never good to say the Bible is evil

Never good to fail to warn against the possibility of Hell

Why does a person of faith take a global rather than individualist view of sin? Why is every sin seen as something that brings evil to others no matter how secret it seems to be? This outlook helps explain why something that someone does that seems harmless or none of your business can be bad. It's how sin can be deceiving and a Pandora's box and does subtle changes to the sinner. Take homosexuality. A lot of the religious condemnation of homosexuality is clearly about the notion that it is just bad to be an active gay person. For that reason, even the gay who would never touch a teenager is considered part of the problem when a gay man sleeps with somebody who is too young. The Church says that there is a problem if the kind of body you have does not matter when it comes to sex. That is what the idea that only a man and woman in marriage is allowed to have sex is getting at. You are considered to be opening a Pandora's box of evils even if you would not do the evils yourself.

You may subtly make another feel safe about doing evil and be even more to blame than he or she is when you help them feel they might as well do the bad thing for otherwise they are so good. The not all bad thinking in relation to religion purposely denies that. To think that way proves your religion is all bad for its indirect or perhaps unrecognised role and not wanting to admit it makes it bad.

All religions and all people know we project

You have feelings, outlooks and attitudes. When you think any others have them just because you have them that is projection. It's a habit for everybody to some degree. The bad side of that habit is that you will start feeling you have done bad things and start attributing the same bad attitudes and deeds to others. Another bad side is that you end up with a God who matches what you think he should be. So he is about what you decree about him not what he decrees about you. You may condone him hurting babies for that is what you would do. It could be that you want babies to be hurt for you think that means your baby will be left alone.

When projection is a part of human nature, you cannot simply say that what your religion has done or the bad members it claims for its own are nothing to do with you.

Equality means religion gets no special praise

How do we explain Christianity's charity when the religion says that human beings are tainted by sin and can't do good unless they find something godless or bad in it? It is an admission that the religion should get no more praise for doing good than any other entity should. Both it and the Communist Party stand together on that issue. Religion hates this suggestion as there are clearly movements we have the right to demand must be abolished and it is our right not to let them hide behind, "We do a lot of good too. Or give us a chance!"

When you say religion is good and any bad or violence is not religion you reach some odd conclusions. It becomes, "Priests do not molest children. Fr Smyth abused children therefore Smyth is not a priest." It is a bad sign how religion wants people to talk such rubbish. It is frightening that people would lie that way! The argument objectifies the human person. Why say "religion is not religion when it hurts" and not, "It is human to be good. John killed Jake so John is not human"? The assertion is that the religious person has value but not as a human being.

Jesus

Jesus warned his followers not to expect love and praise from the world and argued that the world is hostile to the things of God. If the world praises religion then it is insulting it. It loves it not as godly but because it sees some use in it for its own purposes.

The world can have no praise for most of what religion is. The world will not praise lots of prayers, sacraments, holy books and so on. It only thinks of the hospitals and the schools and the priests who cut ribbons.

Religion and faith see hospitals and education as extras not essentials. There is no commandment from God to worry about them. What is essential and seen as the good work that matters more than any other even saving billions of lives is prayer. When religion thinks of itself as good that is the kind of good it is really foremost thinking of.

It is political laziness and stupidity that leads the world to call religion good.

Religion as solidarity

Solidarity has lots of definitions but the best way to understand is to bring in an old proverb. An injury to one is an injury to all sums up what solidarity is all about and why it is so great. It is a vital indispensable element to any social change. Without solidarity we are easily divided. Without unity we become a target to ourselves. We become a target for others. Strength is in solidarity.

A religion by definition is a solidarity not of people but of faith or believers. You do not need a religion to have a solidarity of people. This teaching shows us that a religion then by definition cannot be truly good if it is false or manmade or deluded. It is only conditionally good as long as there are good people in it. In reality it is their effort rather than anything specifically religious that is doing the good.

Catholicism says that false religion is bad but that does not mean we cannot celebrate anything in it that is good. However the good in it belongs to God not to it.

The claim of Christianity to be a family and the body of Christ plainly says that the sin of one is the sin of all in a sense. The claim that when a priest abuses a child or a Muslim flies a plane into an occupied building that "that is only one or two individuals - they are not all bad" is an attack on religious doctrine. It is a political social argument then rather than a religious one.

Think of Islamist terrorists. Nobody is seriously saying that all Muslims are terrorists. When all Muslims are blamed for terrorism that is not the same as calling them all terrorists. Indeed truly good families accept the stigma and blame for what a member has done even against their will. It sets them on their toes for working on the problem. Ignoring solidarity insults the religionists who though not terrorists feel tainted by it and agree that they should be tainted by it for the evil says something about them even if it is tiny.

When somebody in a religion kills or hurts in its name, those who bleat, "They are not all bad" are in fact accusing those who say the problem is with religion of saying all members are as bad as that person. That is a lie. They are demonising. They are only encouraging the religion and all its members to those who say it.

Religious rejection of ad hominem

Ad hominem is when you argue that a belief or opinion is wrong because the person expressing it is a hypocrite or something. Its an argument against the person making the argument and is not an argument against the argument. But even if the person is dishonest and a charlatan and are the devil incarnate their belief or opinion could be right. A belief being true or false has nothing at all to do with the kind of person the believer is.

Another form of ad hominem, an ad hominem in reverse, is arguing that a religion is true/good because its members are above average good. A less strong claim is that the religion may not be true/good but true/good enough. Those who say that violent Muslims are not Muslims at all are presupposing that idea. Thus their argument is arrogant and bad not to mention irrational to the level of being obviously absurd.

And if being good makes your religion true then you have to admit that being bad makes it untrue. The only fair and honest solution is that good or bad people both reflect on their religion.

No religion officially embraces ad hominem. If their scriptures or God or doctrines endorse such thinking the religion would rather forget that.

The "We are all sinners" copout

When a religion has a history of terrorism the number involved does not matter. What matters is that it happens at all. The terrorists win if they get us to see it as a numbers game and we end up sort of to blame if we play along with that rubbish. The terrorists need to be heard and listened to when they claim the religion is a driving cause. By calling itself good the religion is averting that discussion and thus to blame for the problem. Not all in a religion are terrorists simply because not all can be and because some are not committed enough or they think its wrong under the circumstances.

Women generally do not fight anyway but expect others to do it so its dishonest to assert that people in a religion are not all bad for that mostly and usually means the women. And then there is the children. It is an insult to point to children as evidence that a religion is good. If they could and would fight in war it would be different. Thus you cannot use their innocence to water down the danger from the adult males.

As for the terrorists and fanatical killers, the question is not if the religion sends them out to slay and maim it but is there anything in its belief system that forms its identity that can inspire or smooth the way to religious related violence? The we are all sinners talk discourages religionists from challenging the subtle influence on the basis, "What can I say when I am a sinner myself?" Accepting one another as sinners normalises a refusal to fix the faith or get a better one. It keeps the problem thriving. There is too much concentration on the actively violent as if they live in a vacuum. What about the faith context that made them?

"We are all sinners" is just an excuse when a religion has members who do harm and commit violence in the name of religion. As bad as it is to dodge the responsibility as a religion by saying that when Holy Catholic Joe robs the bank, it is

nothing like saying it when Joe burns down the Mosque for faith reasons. The excuse is really saying, "Forget about what my Church members did. Think of how you are not that great either. You are a sinner too."

Consider when a faction or group in a religion or who the religion recognises as its own engages in terrorism or sectarian violence religion says that we are all sinners. How they can say that and then claim that the terrorists have nothing to do with them "for we are not all bad" shows just how manipulative they are. If the sinner who steals a bag of crisps is considered one of your own as a sinner then the terrorist should be as well and has to be. A religion saying its a collection of sinners means it has to take responsibility and it is not just the responsibility of the actual terrorist.

So they say when some of them become terrorists, "We are all sinners but we reject that violence". What do they mean? They could mean one or all of the following.

They could mean that as in resignation and would say to you, "They bomb and kill in the name of our faith but what would you expect?". They could mean that as we all sin it is only natural for some if not all to engage in religious related violence. That is disgraceful for there should be no resignation in such a serious matter. If people give up trying to be non-violent after hearing a message like that can we be surprised? The violent would feel sort of supported by such a horrible attitude as sported by those who think their religious evil is just human nature.

Resignation could be a tool for making the terrorist inclined feel safe and tolerated in acting on those inclinations.

They could mean, "We all sin and their sins are simply different from ours." That is insulting and dismissive. They even degrade themselves by putting themselves on the same level as the terrorists. Or is it really degradation if that is their attitude? If you are a faith terrorist and think your sins and Mother Teresa's sins are equally bad but just different sins then you are warped. Your religion is as bad as you if it would agree with your insane ideas about sin.

They could mean that we are all sinners but at least we have the right religion so we should battle sinners of other religions or certain sinners within our own religion such as heretics for we have to battle somebody anyway.

If we are all sinners and if we can twist even good things into sin then why can't religion itself be an example of sin? If man is sin then why can't religion be sin?

Some things like smoking are greatly loved though they do harm and love for religion could be similar.

The doctrine that all are sinners implies that as far as people in it are concerned, religion is not all good.

The sinner doctrine especially when it tries to make us all equal in sin before God only encourages sin. People sin easily when they think they are in company.

The doctrine that we are all sinners can become an encouragement to sin especially for the religion that teaches it for religion functions as a placebo for the tormented conscience. If there is no God to erase that sin then you are not entitled to that placebo. And you do not need it in order to try and fix the harm you have done to people. The risk of being wrong is a real one and thus no religion can or should claim to be totally good for risk is bad in itself even if it is needed. Other goods make it tolerable but it is not good in itself.

Some Christian countries in the past were remarkably civilised. But that did not stop innocent people from being banished and legally tortured and murdered because they were thought to contradict the Christian orthodoxy. The goodness was the reason why they felt they should destroy. Some goodness or some good people in a religion cannot make a religion good. It is stupid to take God's command, "You shall not murder" as condemning the death penalty when those who wrote the Bible clearly believed in the death penalty and assumed one reason for the command was that nobody would murder and have to end up executed. Today's supporters of the death penalty cite the command and hold that it in context is pro-death-penalty.

Politically correct people ignore religious doctrines and scriptures that incite to violence and when religionists obey those evil teachings the politically correct just pretend it has nothing to do with religion.

Enough is enough. Religion is bad and using the not all bad is surprisingly against the religious self-understanding which is reflected in the doctrine.