

Christian type Religion, Is it a Force for Good or Evil?

Politics and politicians are often intimidated by the number of devoted people in a big religion. That is part of what the unjust praise religion gets is about and why political language usually says that religious terrorism is not religious terrorism but just terrorism! The implication is that a terrorist religion should not be understood as a religion. That prevents dialogue with it and keeps the problem prolonged. It turns religion into another name for good.

A religion defining itself as good means nothing. Good is a vague term in a world of relativists. A religion has to be good instead of defining itself. If it is not good or good enough then it is a bad and false religion. A religion defining itself as good proves it is not good for it has no right to do that.

Some say that when religion does bad it is not acting as a religion. This means that if a religion is attacked or sued for evil doctrine it cannot defend itself by appealing to the right of freedom of religion. Interestingly it does try that route.

Why stop there? Why not say that when a religion ignores evidence and teaches false doctrine and dismisses disproofs of that doctrine that it is not acting as a religion then?

To define religion as being the same as good is ridiculous. Nobody really thinks it is as good to be pope as it is to save a baby's life or it is as good to read the Litany of the Virgin Mary as to read a leaflet about child protection. And working out good is difficult and each moral theory ends up hurting somebody for no theory is perfect.

Is it not dangerous if we tell ourselves religion is safe if it is not? Some who feel that religion is dangerous feel that to say so encourages believers to support the danger so they pretend the religion is all lovey-dovey.

Now that we have all that cleared up let us ask if religion is a force for good or evil. Some say religion commands only good - that view is nonsense. If religion is man-made then there is a potential there for creating violence especially when human rules and doctrines are claimed to be God's when they are not. That is making an idol out of scriptures, theologians, prophets and popes. And the scriptures of the religions all report and approve evil that was endorsed by a higher power.

And far-fetched excuses and complicated "interpretations" (usually politically expedient or politically correct distortions) are created by theologians to get around the nasty and evil and stupid commands of God. Interestingly the Bible never says a word to defend the evil it says God commanded. Christians speculate that the Canaanites had to be destroyed but all the reasons they come up with are guesses. It is sick to invent reasons for murder that are not even endorsed by the Bible itself. The Bible just takes it for granted that it was right for God's people to kill others. God never explains exactly why say homosexuals must be destroyed nor does he justify having them murdered by stoning. There are loads of other examples. Religion is supposed to be for the ordinary person. The theological arguments to get around the bad and the lies are too difficult, bizarre and improbable and the people don't have the time and often the ability to understand them. The arguments are not going to convince those who feel a call to ignite religious violence even if they are intelligent. And why should they for the people who got the commands would have known little about scriptures and religion and still God told them through his prophets to slay and rape and maim for the greater good. God himself demands that the men invested with his authority be obeyed and they certainly did not think like theologians or understand religion well. Even the religious leaders didn't - do you really think religious war-monger Moses or Muhammad was a theologian? The theologians are just frauds - they are trying to defend evil by a standard that was rejected by God and his people.

Some say that when a religion does bad, it may be listening to and obeying the bad commands in its scriptures and not the good ones. Their solution for this is telling them to follow the good commands. That is only cherry-picking and hypocrisy. Corruption will soon ensue. The evil commands are not to be belittled by merely being ignored. Doing that shows that your respect for life and your concern for the harm they do or have done is dimming. And you should be doing good for the sake of people not because a god or book says so! The solution is artificial and just enables the lack of empathy and integrity that draws people to commit atrocities in the name of faith.

If you start reading the nasty infallible decrees of the Catholic Church and those of its God in the Bible calling for belief in stupid doctrines and for holy war and the brutal execution of certain sinners and argue, "The religion is a good religion when understood properly," that is desensitisation. The people who obeyed the evil rules told themselves the same thing. If we refuse to face our evil we will never get the chance to overcome it. Plus, a good religion for one person allows abortion to save the life of the mother and a good religion for another does not. A good religion for one person eliminates all who challenge the veracity and truth of that religion - eg religious sceptics - so that people will keep believing what God says must be believed to avoid a worse fate than being destroyed - everlasting agony in Hell. A good religion for another considers morality to be relative. The likes of Tony Blair who says that Christianity is about love and who refuses to admit

that its God and Jesus endorsed religious fanaticism and cruelty is saying, "Christianity is whatever agrees with me." The arrogance! He therefore lacks credibility and so by urging people to become Christian he is saying, "Be stalwart Christians - I may be wrong that its a religion that forbids fanaticism and cruelty in the name of God so if you think you should execute gays on scriptural grounds then go ahead."

The Bible God commanded the death penalty. This was solely for getting rid of the "sinful" person. God said that its about purging the evil from your midst. The Christian won't mention that and if a critic would then it would be passed over.

Some Christians in their ignorance justify God's command on the grounds of deterrence and ignore the fact that the death penalty does not deter criminals and indeed makes society more inhuman. Imagine the damage that God's command that the death penalty is the way to deal not just with murderers but kidnappers and adulteresses and idol-worshippers and gay men must have done?

http://www.reprive.org.uk/articles/2010_02_17_DP_campaign_deterrence/

The Bible says in Ephesians 4 that sin has tainted our understanding and claims that we must give God the utmost commitment and learn about him from the book he wrote, the Bible. None of this fits the Christian attitude which is really just about inventing excuses to get around the teaching of the Bible. It will lack credibility and fail to dissuade those who want to murder and maim because the Bible God allows murdering and maiming. Politics unlike religion can never claim the authority and right to tell people what to think. Religion is more dangerous.

Christians allege that the problem of anti-Semitism would not disappear if religion, specifically the Christian religion and Islam, disappeared. But nobody can deny that the prevalence and the virulence of anti-Semitism would diminish if religion vanished.

To hold that salvation can only be got through Jesus makes it impossible to truly respect a person of religion or an atheist who denies or ignores that. Christians sometimes answer that they have their own firm belief and they can respect the right of the other to hold their belief and even respect the belief. Also the claim that the sincere non-Christian is actually getting saved by Jesus without knowing it is patronising and arrogant and condescending. Would Christians like it if Satanists said that Satan was doing what they think Jesus is doing for them? Saying Jesus works to save people even if they think he is not is just another form of intolerance.

Respecting the right of the person to differ is enough. We should all be mature enough to agree to differ. But to go as far as to say that a belief even if evil or stupid should be respected and celebrated is ridiculous. And if the Catholics celebrate Islamic opposition to the worship of the communion wafer they pray to they are contradicting their Catholic faith.

Respecting belief is a buzz thing today and the do-gooders love it. But it necessarily implies disrespect for persons. Here is how. If you respect a person's belief that is not the same as respecting the person. The person is not their belief. You must respect the person by refusing to laugh at or ridicule their belief. You should not feel right if a person says they are disrespecting your belief - what about you? Things are not respected for their own sake but for the sake of people. It is really the people who are respected. If belief should be respected then belief is sacred no matter how stupid or bad it is.

Would the Christians hold that a person has the right to reject God so we should not encourage anybody to accept God into their lives? No. They do not really believe that belief should be automatically respected. Nobody does.

The modern insistence on respecting belief is really religion trying to create a culture where it avoids getting criticised or debunked by scholarship. The person for example who shows that religion is lying about its powers and benefits is considered to be a sociopath. Respecting belief is really about promoting not tolerance but skin-deep tolerance.

Those religionists who use that respecting other faiths and beliefs line are irritating hypocrites. At least they are evidence that religious leaders carry on like politicians - fake charm and craftiness and bending the truth. Such is his arrogance that he does not want to notice how the likes of him defending religion is only going to put people off religion. He sugarcoats religious evil.

Some people say we should accept people who have beliefs that differ from ours because there is more than one road to God! The implication is that thinking you alone have the way leads to intolerance! Atheists go a bit further and say that trying to find God leads to intolerance!

If religion as religion is not at fault when its followers do evil, then maybe it is the type of religion that is the problem. But as religion is all united in its acceptance of the supernatural, it is intrinsically dodgy.

Even if a religionist is good, he or she has to take responsibility for the silly and harmful beliefs of the religion. As long as

you are a member, you are taking on this responsibility. It does not matter that you didn't invent the doctrines or preach them. You are sharing responsibility for them by supporting the authority that makes the doctrines.

Religion is not a force for good and any good that takes place does not take place because of religion but in spite of it.