

AVOIDING STRAWMAN INTERPRETATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

A strawman in relation to a religion is misinterpreting that religion or interpreting it in such a way as to make it look unconvincing, evil or stupid. Heretics strawman the religion they were born into. Sin and heresy in religion are seen as missing the mark. You aim at the dartboard and miss. This means that the real truth about what the religion teaches is stronger than your opinion of it. You are acting like a parasite. Thus nobody should distort religion but should leave if it is wrong. Trying to get it to fit the truth when it is not the truth is just deceitful and hypocritical.

To avoid strawmen nonsense, a careful definition of Christianity is needed. We need to eliminate people who claim to be Christian and are not. Christianity is a belief system expressed in rites, prayer, gatherings and adherence to scriptures which is organised and accepts Jesus Christ as having the final say and sees the Bible, Old and New Testaments as the expression of his will and which claims that Jesus Christ alone is the way to a virtuous salvation in Heaven and is incapable of error or sin. This excludes any counterfeit of Christianity such as Mormonism. The heretic then is not representative of the faith and has no right to speak on it or as a representative.

Christians hold that there is a true form of the Christian faith. Some individuals and denominations are better at conforming than others. They admit that beliefs are part of Christianity and that certain ones are not even if they pose as Christian beliefs. There is then a quintessence of the doctrine taught by Jesus. This is based on the fact that if there is a God then he knows things we don't and who are we to question? We would be arrogant and self-appointed God's if we thought we could! There is one Christian faith. It is not a free for all. This is expressed in Jesus' claim that he was the way and the truth and the life. Jesus is not the way and the strong opinions and the life. He claims that he has facts not opinions. Opinions are a kind of guess. If Jesus does not teach final doctrine, doctrine that ends the debate, then he is not much of a revelation from God. We will not be sure where the God bits start and where the human elements end or vice versa. All any religion then can ask for is a set of human responses to a set of possibly divine or possibly human ideas and doctrines. There would be more than one real or genuine way to be Christian just like there are loads of ways you can be a Communist or a Hindu. If so then the Christian who burns witches for sport and the Muslim who suicide bombs gay clubs is as much Christian as Pope John Paul II and as Muslim as Muhammad himself. To give the label equally to the bad and the good is rewarding the bad in some way. It's a sort of embrace. If a religion has violent teachings or anything that can reasonably lead to violence eg the notion that suffering is a gift from God - and it subjects itself to human responses then it has to take responsibility as a religion if people are killed. If it claims to be divine and not about what people think or want to think then it is to blame another way. Human or divine the religion must hold its hands up.

Who are members of the Catholic Church? The Church teaches that those people are members of the Catholic Church who have been validly baptized, and who have not been excluded from the Catholic Church by means of heresy, schism, or excommunication. Pope Pius XII teaches in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: "Actually only those are to be included as members of the Church who have been baptized and profess the true faith, and who have not been so unfortunate as to separate themselves from the unity of the Body, or been excluded by legitimate authority for grave faults committed. 'For in one spirit' says the Apostle, 'were we all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free.' As therefore in the true Christian community there is only one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one Baptism, so there can be only one faith. And therefore if a man refuse to hear the Church let him be considered - so the Lord commands - as a heathen and a publican. It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit." Therefore in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, which is the one, true Church, there are only the following categories of people:

- (1) Catholics, i.e., those who are members of the Roman Catholic Church;
- (2) heretics, that is, validly baptized people who have left the Church because they adhere publicly to false teachings and/or non-Catholic sects;
- (3) schismatics, that is, validly baptized people who have left the Church because they refuse to recognize the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, or belong to sects which profess the same;
- (4) excommunicates, those who have been ejected from the Church by declaratory sentence of excommunication;
- (5) infidels, that is, the unbaptized, who fall into two subcategories: (a) Jews, whose error of resistance to the true Messiah has a special name, that of perfidy, and (b) heathens, that is, pagans, idolaters, and people who have no religion at all.

Jesus said that anybody who ascribed the works of the Holy Spirit to the Devil was guilty of a sin that would never be pardoned. The gospel says that he said this for the Pharisees and scribes said that he was casting out devils by the power of Satan so they are being accused of this sin. Christians say the sin can't be forgiven because anybody that says something like that is too wicked to repent and always will be.

If heresy is a sin then heretics are doing the same thing. They are claiming that a revelation from God is really a satanic lie and the grace that causes others to believe in it is from the demons so heresy is the most dangerous of sins. So, a heretic cannot ever truly repent of the sin for he or she is too evil. The heretic has to be persecuted to stop her or him from drawing anybody else into the same sin.

The Church welcomes back repentant heretics to her fold. Isn't she power-hungry? It is not them she wants but what they can do for her.

If heresy is such a terrible sin then it is madness not to kill or incarcerate or cut the hands and tongues off the person who speaks it and kill them instantly in case they lead another into the same sin.

Funny that denial of a doctrine of the Church constitutes the sin of heresy for which you are excommunicated, and that the heresy of believing you are spiritually okay with God when you are not is not so penalised. It is better to be a bad person and refuse to believe it than to be a denier of the faith. This shows that Roman Catholicism is geared towards the acquisition of power and its concern for morality is minute.