

Reason for God: Chapter One: There Can't Be One True Religion

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Controlling Religion

- **Outlaw Religion**: Problem is it can't be outlawed effectively since religion is a central and important part of human existence.
- **Condemn Religion**: The dominant culture seeks to “label” religion as spurious, anti-intellectual, bigoted etc. However because religion is important to its adherents this approach doesn't work either.
- **Privatize Religion**: Religious values speak to all parts of human existence and cannot be effectively eliminated from public discourse.

Critique of Religions

- **All Religions are Equally Valid**: This is challenged by looking at what religions do or advocate for.
- **Each of the Religions See Part of Spiritual Truth but None See All**: How can anyone make such a claim unless they themselves had the capacity to have knowledge beyond any religion.
- **Religion is Too Culturally and Historically Conditioned to be Truth**: It is illogical to assert that “all claims about religions are historically conditioned except for the one I am making right now.”
- **It is Arrogant to Assert that One Religion is True and Every Other is Untrue**: “It is no more narrow to claim that one religion is right than it is to claim all religions are equal.”

Keeping Religion Entirely Private

- Assertion: Religion should be excluded from the public sphere.
- “Religious-based positions are seen as sectarian and controversial while secular reasoning for moral positions are seen as universal and available to all. Therefore public discourse should be secular, never religious.”
- Excluding religion from public discourse “will always in the end say to those of organized religion that they alone .. must enter public dialogue only after leaving behind that part of themselves that they may consider the most vital.”

What is Religion?

- “It is a set of beliefs that explain what life is all about, who we are, and the most important things that human beings should spend their time doing.”
- This could be construed as a “worldview” or a “narrative identity.”
- “Broadly understood, faith in some view of the world informs everyone’s life.”
- “Everyone operates out of some narrative identity”

The Paradox of Christianity

- Religion (and Christianity) can threaten world peace.
- Yet Christianity also has the capacity to explain and expunge divisiveness from the human heart.
- “Christianity provides a firm basis for respecting people of other faiths.”
- “Christians believe that all human beings are made in God’s image and are capable of goodness and wisdom.”

About The Good Life

- Christianity affirms the goodness in others and leads adherents to believe that many, including non-Christians, will lead lives morally superior to their own.
- Christians also believe God's grace is independent of how we perform morally and is dependent upon the acknowledgement of our need for a savior.