

Philosophy and Religion:  
My View on Religion – IV

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With an Emphasis on How My View Has Changed

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# 1.

## Introduction

In this entry I will continue to outline my views on religion, and the lens through which I see it. As a refresher, I will give below the conclusion that governed my last three entries:

“There is an innate element of human existence that is ultimately missing. That is to say, there is a sense of a void in human existence, that by living life we see and think that there is something not present in human existence. And so it is the purpose of religion, in this context and from this perspective, to provide a conceptualisation of human existence such that the void is filled and human existence is, and feels, whole.”

As a whole, I don't think my conclusion has ultimately changed, but what has changed is the way I now look at it, and its implications.

Firstly in this entry, I will explain what has changed since “My View on Religion - III”. Then, I will explain how this changes my view on religion as a whole.

## 2.

# What Has Changed

### 2.1 Personal Events

Since the last year when I wrote the last entry in this series (late 2020), I became Christian this Easter, or more precisely, a part of the Roman Catholic Church. The ins and outs of why I committed to this move, as best as I can explain, I hope to write about in another entry, as well as what the actual process was, as it may be of interest. I also would like to explain, in other entries, what exactly I mean by “Christianity” (primarily of the Catholic kind), and “The Roman Catholic Church”. Also, I would like to explore what is also meant by “God” in another entry.

I look forward to writing such entries, but anyhow, I will continue the main topic with the next section. Also, it is worth noting that when I talk of “Christianity” and “the Church”, I primarily mean Catholic Christianity, and the Catholic Church. This is simply because I am most familiar with it, and for no other reason.

### 2.2 How My View of Religion Has Changed

Now, after the personal events of the last year took place, as explained in the previous section, it would be remarkably odd if the way I view religion as a whole didn’t change somehow. And so, here I will explain roughly where I stand, and the nature of the viewpoint/framework which I now hold.

Whereas before I looked at all world religions from the outside, now I must look at them through the lens of one. This isn't to say my view is now more closely restricted. What I thought was looking through a keyhole before, is now what I see as looking through an open door. What I mean to say is that looking through the lens of Christianity, doesn't mean that I compromise upon the level of open mindedness with which I can look at other religions, but simply that I have to put them into the overarching framework which I now hold, compared to a previous one which only seemed more objective or universal in viewpoint. Thus, I do not see myself as having lost any sort of universality in viewpoint, by adhering now to a single religion.

### **2.2.1 The Void and the Truth**

Now, I will bring back the conclusion that I repeated in the introduction:

“There is an innate element of human existence that is ultimately missing. That is to say, there is a sense of a void in human existence, that by living life we see and think that there is something not present in human existence. And so it is the purpose of religion, in this context and from this perspective, to provide a conceptualisation of human existence such that the void is filled and human existence is, and feels, whole.”

Here, I will make an amendment to my interpretation of the void I describe above, and link it to the Truth. I will now say that the infinite void present in human existence is a void shaped to the Truth. And so, it wouldn't be surprising if the pursuit of Truth were to be the natural orientation of human life, whether through, or within, science, mathematics, academia, education, engineering, dance, art, friendships, family, or, religion. Note here, that I capitalise “truth”, because what I talk of is the Truth, not a truth. For it must be the Truth, if all of humanity has this Truth shaped void within their experience of existence, as for all it must be the same shape.

One may ask why I see the shape of the void, to be that of the Truth. And the answer, I think, is quite simple, for it lies in how we treat the void. Here we can think empirically on how we act after we may discover the void in our human existence. First of all, we act as if something must be able to fill what is missing. And, as we must know, there are things that don't work, things that we have tried to fill the void with, but are either only partially suitable,

or not suitable at all. Thus, the characteristic which enables the void to be filled lies within that which we search, not within ourselves, otherwise we would be able to fill the void ourselves, which could not be the case, otherwise we would have no problem, or void. And so, we are left with a search for something that can fill the void in our existence, something that must exist, something for which exists other things that are false to this end, and something that has in itself the right characteristics, objectively, to fill the void. And, since all are searching for something with the same characteristics, it must be one thing objectively. And so, it would be that we seek something that is objective, but also something that must be right to fill the missing piece. This, I think, would be something akin to the Truth, or at least, I see no reason how it could not be. Another way of looking at it, is that I could simply say that the very definition of the Truth is that which fills the void within human existence, among other things.

There is also something to note about the nature of the void. We must say that the nature of the void is infinite. Infinite, not because it is immeasurably large, but because it is void of size itself. The infinite is simply that which is transcendent of the finite altogether. There is a reason why so many world religions avoid worldly things to the end of finding the Truth. It must be because worldly things are finite, and the void that must be filled is infinite. Thus, if the void is infinite, then the Truth must be also, if the Truth is to fill the void.

From my current viewpoint as a Christian, I would say that God is the Truth. Hopefully what is meant by the “Truth” is now understood to a degree, even if what is meant by “God”, is not yet as equally understood. But for now, hopefully it doesn’t seem like too far of a leap for me to give such a statement, especially to those unfamiliar with the “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life...” of the New Testament.

### **2.2.2 The Truth and Religion**

Here I must make a distinction between the Truth, and that which points to it. For example, from the Christian perspective, God is the Truth. And so, the question would then be, is Christianity as a religion, and a Church, with all its teachings and theology, the Truth. I would say that here is where the distinction must be made. If indeed God is the absolute Truth, then to say that Christianity is the Truth, must be to say that it is also the Truth

itself, in the same way that God is the Truth itself. Therefore, if Christianity itself was the Truth, in this example, then that must mean in some way that God is on equal, if not lower, ontological grounds than the ideas/practices of the religion of Christianity itself. However, if God is the transcendent Truth, unable to be contained by human reason or ideas, then we meet a contradiction, since here God would be contained by the set of practices and the theology within Christianity. Thus, Christianity cannot be the Truth in its entirety, in itself, for that must only be true of God.

And so, the viewpoint from which I stand sees no religion, not even my own, as being the Truth in itself, yet does not deny that God is the absolute Truth. However, as a Christian myself, I cannot see my own religion as being equally authentic as others, since then there would be no point in me being a Christian, as opposed to being a follower of any other religion. And so, I must view Christianity as being the most accurate pointer to the Truth, even if it is not the Truth itself. Furthermore, although I say Christianity is not the Truth itself, that is not to say that I think there is no Truth within it, nor that it is not in the presence of the Truth. I cannot deny that God is the absolute Truth, and so consequently, I cannot deny that the Church, with all its teaching, must be the most accurate hand that points to the Truth. If I do deny any of these things, then I automatically deny the authenticity of my own religion. I say this so that my position may be understood, and not to say at all, that the conclusion is then that other religions are not authentic, or that they are false, far from it. I still sincerely uphold that all religions, as we understand them, point to the Truth in some way. No one would protect a way of life by practising a religion, if they did not see it as being indicative of the Truth in some way. It would be good to note here that I do not mean a subjective truth, but the Truth.

### 3.

## Conclusion

In a metaphor (or riddle if I have not explained it well), you can climb the highest mountain by either knowing the exact location of the pinnacle, or through a constant search of the highest point from scratch. And so, if you have a climber with a map, and a climber without a map, both can reach the highest peak, but one of them simply takes longer and does not know the peak's name or location. The same mountain is climbed, and the same view is sought. Maybe each religion is like a mountain, too far from the next to see any other mountain, with each climber, on each of the mountains, thinking that their mountain touches the sky. Although, maybe its not about the heights, but simply about where each mountain points. All have their differences, but all make for a more beautiful view.

Ultimately, my current personal view pursues the balance between these statements:

1. No religion is the Truth in itself
2. All religions point to the Truth in some way, and so none can be considered false
3. God is the Truth

It is worth also noting that I primarily mean any of the main world religions when I say “religion” here. This would exclude “religions” that are plainly opposed to the Truth, and those which are mock/parody religions.

I hope that I have shown that these statements are in balance, and that they do not contradict each other. These statements are like a non-violent wrestle

between the acknowledgement of all religions pointing to the Truth, yet of the necessary greater accuracy of my own religion in pointing to the Truth (the third statement). By what means do I see my religion pointing to the Truth in the most accurate way? That must be where faith comes in, the means which goes beyond reason alone.

I hope this document may be of use, and of interest.

Thank you for reading.

*END*