



## The Deadly Paris Terror Attack and the Myth of Religion

“Another attack in the name of religion,” I heard someone say after the vicious and vile Wednesday assault on the offices of French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. And there is a huge problem with “religion.” But it’s not what you think.

Question: When the Nazis, Stalinists, Khmer Rouge, the Shining Path or the Weathermen committed violence, did we lament, “Another attack in the name of ideology”? Did we hear “Ideology is the problem”? That would be about as helpful as going to a doctor with a dreadful illness and, upon asking him what the problem is, his responding “Your state of health.”

Like ideology, religion is a category, not a creed. As with states of health, which occupy a continuum from excellent to awful, they both contain the good, the bad, and the ugly. But modern man, not wanting to place an onus on a faith or seem a “religious” chauvinist, is a bad physician who refuses to name the disease or the cure. So depending on how he is emotionally disposed, we may hear utterances such as “Children need some religion” or “Religion breeds violence.” Ancient Aztec children had “religion,” and they learned well how to sacrifice thousands of innocents a year to Quetzalcoatl on bloody altars. And Amish children have “religion,” and peace and charity define them.

Conservatives exhibit this problem as well. So many will say “Islam is not a religion; it’s a destructive all-encompassing ideology,” or some variation thereof. They treat “religion,” that broad category, as if it’s good by definition. Not that this isn’t understandable. Raised in a relativistic and pluralistic (and these two qualities have a bearing on one another) society, they want to get along with their neighbors; so they tacitly accept an unwritten agreement stating “I won’t say my religion is better than yours if you don’t say yours is better than mine. We’ll just be even-steven!” The trouble is that this solves nothing — and its implications are more dangerous than jihad.

Starting out simply, note that most of the “religions” man has known were more in the nature of the Aztecs’ bloody faith than what we generally embrace today. But many will assert that this is the point: Can’t we say all our mainstream faiths are “good,” practically speaking? Can’t we just omit from their



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 9, 2015

---

category any “religion” not considered good? Well, we can say and do many things, but ideas have consequences. And a civilization with a corrupted philosophical foundation will not long stand.

Consider another question: What makes some ideologies better than others? It’s that they espouse different values. But what of “religions”?

They also espouse different values.

(And not all values are virtues.)

Thus, not all “religions” can be morally equal unless all values are so. This is important to understand. Every time we treat “religions” as if they are all morally equal, every time we spread that idea explicitly or implicitly — no matter how good our intentions — we’re transmitting the notion that all values are equal. And consider what follows from this: If all values are equal, how can peace be better than jihad?

How could respect for life be better than disdain for it?

How could Western law be better than Sharia law?

How could the Sisters of Charity be better than ISIS?

Of course, this means all ideologies would have to be equal as well, from Nazism to Marxism to conservatism to liberalism to libertarianism. Upon embracing relativism, you have no sound intellectual foundation from which to critique or combat anything (though you can certainly fake one without blinking, as relativism deems deception no worse than sincerity).

Why does this matter? Because this relativism has robbed us of an intellectual argument for defending Western civilization (“How could it be better than any other?” asks Professor Larebil). It is the philosophical fifth column that has opened the door to destructive, unassimilable foreign elements via multiculturalism. As to this, multiculturalism states that all cultures are morally equal. But it’s as with “religion” and ideology: Since different cultures espouse different values, not all cultures could be morally equal unless all values were so. It is pure and utter nonsense, a phenomenon of modern times, but, of course, moderns in the main believe it. In fact, the Barna Group research company [reported](#) in 2002 in “Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings” that only *six percent* of teenagers believe “moral truth is absolute.” But it’s an apple that has fallen not far from the burning tree and just a little closer to Perdition — only 22 percent of adults believe in moral absolutes, Barna found, and I think that figure is generous. And this baby philosophy of relativism, my friends, as I’ve been telling you for years and years and years, is why we’re collapsing.

Now let’s return to something mentioned earlier: the criticism of Islam for not being a “religion” but a whole system for living. This misses the point that your “religion,” if *true*, is supposed to be a whole system for living. And this also brings me to why I have religiously placed “religion” in quotation marks.

This distinction between “religious” and “secular” is largely a *false one*.

There is only one distinction that truly matters: the true and the untrue.

“Secular” and “religious,” especially in the sense we use them, are relatively modern terms. There was a time when beliefs were not “secular” or “religious” — or even liberal or conservative, or right or left — but simply true or untrue.

And this is the only perspective that makes sense. Think about it: If God exists, is it significant that we call recognition of this reality “religious” or that it’s true? If communism is essentially false, is it significant that we call recognition of that reality “secular” or that it’s untrue? There is only Truth and



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 9, 2015

---

everything else — and everything else, no matter how you dress it up linguistically, is nothing at all.

In a way, pusillanimous moderns are much like pious Muslims. Muslim theology entertains the curious notion of “dual truth,” the idea that what may be true “religiously” may not be true in nature. This silliness was rejected by Western thinkers in the Middle Ages; now, however, something smacking of it has been embraced by their descendants, who may say things such as “A little ‘religion’ is okay, as long as you don’t go overboard.” Or they may compartmentalize faith, thinking it must be left outside the government-building door or even relegate it to one hour a week of “worship services,” as if it’s mere recreation or an unhealthful indulgence only to be taken in moderation. But if your faith is the Truth — if it reflects the will of the Creator of the Universe — you have an obligation to govern yourself, and infuse your every institution, with it. And if it be a lie, it belongs nowhere but the bowels of Hell.

Of course, if, like most Americans, we believe [everything is relative](#), then none of this matters. Then tolerance and intolerance, multiculturalism and cultural chauvinism, charity and barbarity, the “religious” and the “secular” are all equal. And then those darkly clad men with AK-47s in Paris on Wednesday couldn’t really have been “wrong.” They just had a different perspective.

If we don’t really believe this, then it’s time to grow up. It’s time to understand that if everything is relative, then what we say is relative, too, and thus meaningless. So let’s talk about what is meaningful.

We can start by accepting that culture isn’t bad, but there are better and worse cultures. “Religion” isn’t bad, but there is bad “religion.” And tolerance, correctly defined as the abiding of perceived negatives, isn’t bad — except when those perceived negatives are objectively negative and, instead of just being tolerated, could actually be wiped out. Willful tolerance of evil is evil itself.

The Muslims have bad “religion.” We have bad philosophy. Both our civilizations believe in things that are untrue. It’s the “tolerant” meeting the intolerable, a match made in Hell — and poised to create exactly that on Earth.

[Contact Selwyn Duke](#), [follow him on Twitter](#) or log on to [SelwynDuke.com](#)



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

**Subscribe**