

Dualistic thinking

The other day an interesting piece of paper landed on my desk. It was a poster advertising a grand debate to be held at the University called "Saviour of the World: "Jesus or the Qur'an?" The debate organised by the Evangelical Union is to bring together an imam and a Christian "expert on Islam." The accompanying screed said "Islam is increasingly offering itself as the true path to God and saying that Jesus is not the saviour of the world as Christians believe. Who is right? Come and hear this important debate to help yourself understand the issues involved, and invite friends (Muslim, Christian or anyone else), so that they can see why these issues matter."

And I thought to myself, here we go again, playground "My God is bigger than your God" stuff. And what a waste of effort! I wondered, what was the point? - To win any stray Muslims over? Or perhaps we were to have Holy Book quotations at twenty paces. Scriptures says or the Qur'an says.... And does someone always have to be right? Could it be that they are both right?

At any rate such debating exercises are what I believe is wrong with religion and our world. We set up "I'm right and you are wrong" scenarios in all areas of our society. The thought that you are either for me or against me is rife and of course such a stance becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. When are we going to grow up and recognise that such dualistic thinking - I'm totally right and you're totally wrong reasoning - will never lead to peaceful co-existence.

We see the results of such thinking all around, in the political sphere where politicians refuse to see any good coming out of the Opposition. The very name says it all, especially if some of the language used is couched in militaristic language like "going on the attack," and of course our media is complicit for such phrases make good headlines. I was appalled recently when a change of leadership was said to have resulted in death squads stalking the parliament corridors!

As I See It, the God I worship is far bigger than our tribal religions, and if God is not, then that god is not the God of the universe. In this week's gospel there is a story of a person who was an outsider a victim of the "My God is bigger than your God" game- a Samaritan, an unbeliever, an infidel, someone who was shunned by good Jews. Yet Jesus, a good Jew, uses this story to demonstrate what faithfulness to God is all about. No debates for Jesus, he just lived each day in close union with his Father and told stories of love and acceptance. Jesus saw the truth in people's actions not in what they said they believed. Jesus the great reconciler saw love as the great unifier. He was a non-dual thinker par excellence, who saw beyond the rhetoric and law to the very heart of things.

And that heart is Love – God.

Tony would be more than happy to chat about the above article.

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