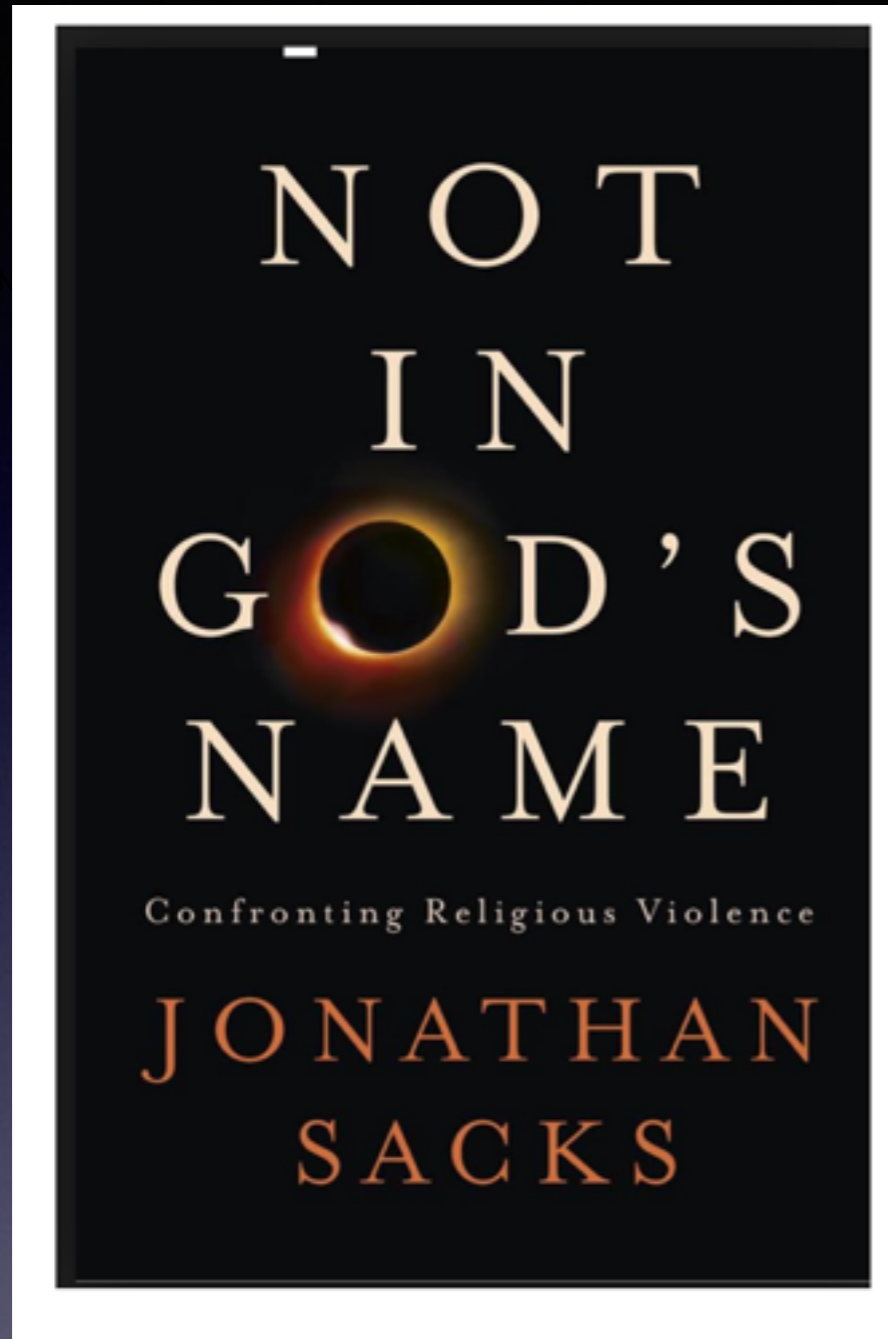


NOT
**NOT IN
GOD'S NAME**



ACTS
WINTER 2018

St David's United Church
Calgary



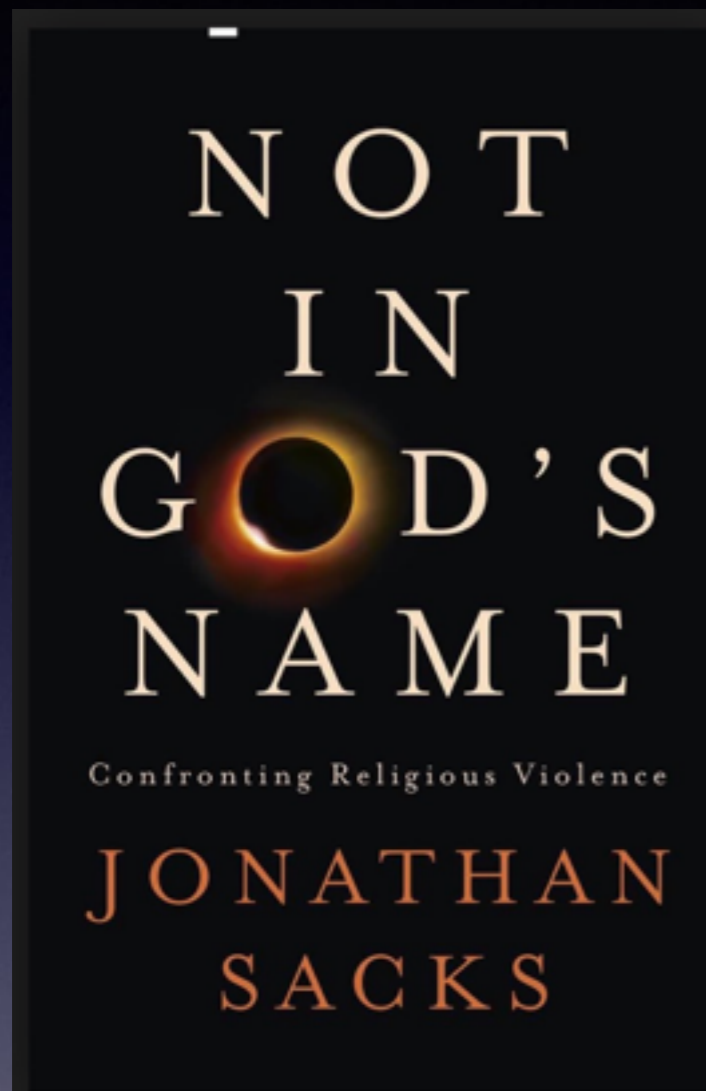
Holy Manners Book Study # 40

Session #3

- House Keeping
- Opening: Colin

Housekeeping

- Update: Thursday Morning Bible Study and Coffee and Muffin Ministry
- LENTEN RETREAT - MT. ST. FRANCIS on Sunday, March 4th - 11:30 AM to 4:00 PM. The theme, led by retreat leader Susan Campbell is "Encountering a Sacred Intimacy With God"
- SDUC.ca



Opening:

Colin Outtrim

Violence and Identity

Reflections on SDUC Spiritual
Travellers' Visit to the
Holy Land, 2015

Museum of the Holocaust



Conflict on the Temple Mount



The Western Wall

Dome of the Rock

WHY DO WE HUMANS DO BAD THINGS IN SPITE OF OUR DESIRE TO BE GOOD?

- KNOWLEDGE (said Plato) People do wrong through ignorance.
- REASON (said Kant) There are universal standards of behaviour to which all humans ultimately subscribe.
- FEELINGS/PASSIONS (said Hume) Essential human empathy for others exists - The Golden Rule “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you.”

QUESTION: *If we humans desire to be good, why do we usually do badly? ...*

This dilemma causes
us to ask again
religious questions
about sin, evil and
personal/social
dysfunction.



St. Paul
summarized the
problem:
Romans 7:24-25
KJV

“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

We ask ourselves with Rabbi Sacks....

“If we believe that we are all created in the image of God, why do some people kill others in the name of God? Why do we do harm to the work of God, especially to fellow humans?”





Rabbi Sacks
proposes that we
are individuals
and social
animals.

“As individuals we
could probably be
good. As social
groups we
compromise our
principles.”

Is this not part of the important theological distinction that Paul struggled with in Romans 7?

Am I/are we born sinful (or) Do I/we learn to be sinful?

Original sin? Tabula Rosa? Learned sinful behaviour? Nature vs. Nurture?

Rabbi Sacks believes that...

- Individuals join communities for the purpose of self-preservation.
- Communities see the power of religion to sustain them over time and help them to survive - individually and communally.



Violence...

- has nothing to do with religion as such. It has to do with identity and life in groups.
- Most conflicts and wars have nothing to do with religion whatsoever. They are about power, territory and glory — things both secular and profane.

A World without Identities would be a world without war.

- Three attempts to destroy identity in history:

- One Religion: Pauline Christianity (a single faith) “There is neither Jew nor Greek - all are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:28)
- One Culture: European Enlightenment - transcended divisions of faith and dogma through reason, philosophy and science. But the attempt to replace religion with human ideology led to worse crimes than religious wars.
- One Race: Elimination of Identity - abolished groups altogether and instead, enthroned the individual. The focus is on individualism, the idol is the self.

**THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY HAS
RETURNED.**

SUMMARY FOR CHAPTER TWO

- We cannot as humans bear the absence of individualistic public meanings or collective moral identity.
- Modern societies (individuals and groups) suffer from emptiness, meaninglessness, materialism and narcissism.
- Out of this, radical holy warriors who are altruists do evil while claiming they serve a divine cause.



DUALISM vs MONISM

Cartesian Duality:
MATTER-MIND



KEY:

Physical and Mental substance
is either fundamental or derivative.
(solid line) (dashed line)

Physicalism:
MATTER > Mind



Idealism:
Matter < MIND



Neutral Monism:
3rd SUBSTANCE
> Matter & Mind



The debate

- Plato, a dualist proponent, argued that a person's soul and body are two dissimilar elements which intermingle.
- The real identity of a person is inherent in his or her soul.
- The real person is completely distinct from the body
- Soul did exist before the body, and after death, the soul will leave the body.
- Soul is perfect at all times; however, the body persistently corrupts it.
- Human beings have the responsibility of taking care of their soul to prevent it from becoming corrupted.

<http://schoolofresearch.org/>

KEY QUESTIONS

- Do I look at the world in a GOOD VERSUS BAD way?

OR

- Do I look at the world in a GOOD AND BAD way?

Religion (in true and false forms) can support us to do either, but what will be the way I ultimately choose?

our human dilemma

- Should we speak of good VERSUS bad or should we speak of good AND bad?
- MY PERSONAL DISCOVERY
- Discuss your discoveries

Qumran and Nag Hammadi: Two sets of ancient Scriptures that supported theological dualism
or
exclusivist versus inclusivist ways of seeing the world



Monotheist

- Neither sets of texts are indigenous to Judaism or Christianity because these religions are monotheist.
- Qumran and Nag Hammadi survived as Manichaeism and Gnosticism and these heresies survive to the day.

Dualism is what happens when cognitive dissonance becomes unbearable - when the world as it is, is simply too unlike the world we believed it to be.

Dualism entered both Judaism and Christianity when it became easier to attribute the sufferers of the world to an evil force rather than to the work of God.

God of Law versus God of Love — Hebrew Bible vs. Christian Testament

A CLASSIC CHRISTIAN DUALISM, EVEN TODAY

What other dualisms occur in our
everyday thinking?

EXTREME DUALISTIC THINKING

PATHOLOGICAL DUALISM:
MAKES YOU DEHUMANIZE AND
DEMONIZE YOUR ENEMIES. ALMOST NO
ONE IS IMMUNE TO DUALISM ONCE IT
TAKES HOLD OF A CULTURE.

THE NAZI PHENOMENON

DEHUMANIZATION/
VICTIMHOOD/
ALTRUISM

“ALT-REALITY” LEADS
TO “NEW REALITY.”



“MONOTHEISTIC RELIGION AS DEFINED BY
JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY IS
ULTIMATELY MORE HUMANE.”

– Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Expanding our **encounter with Sacks and his book**

Jonathan Sacks: “Not in God’s Name”

A Video Presentation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK3PK_qHkrs

18:30 - 26:00

Next Week

Opening: Pat

Reading Assignment: February 12th

Bad Faith:

Chapters 4 - The Scapegoat
and Chapter 5 - Sibling Rivalry

Closing: Sheryl

Closing: The Politics of Hope

<http://youtu.be/5Xq831b2tPg>

- Have a great week!
- See you on February 12th.