

DOWNLOAD PDF SCRIPTURE AS FORM AND CONCEPT WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH

Chapter 1 : What Is Scripture? by Wilfred Cantwell Smith

Wilfred Cantwell Smith OC (July 21, - February 7,) was a Canadian professor of comparative religion who from was director of Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions.

He received a B. In he obtained a Ph. From to Smith taught at Harvard Divinity School. He was also among the original Editorial Advisors of the scholarly journal *Dionysius*. In he returned to Harvard. In he received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University. He died on February 7, Religion, he argues, is a static concept that does not adequately address the complexity and flux of religious lives. Instead of the concept of religion, Smith proffers a new conceptual apparatus: Other than the prophet Mani , only the prophet Muhammad was conscious of the establishment of a religion. Smith points out that the Arabic language does not have a word for religion, strictly speaking: The terms for major world religions today, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, did not exist until the 19th century. Smith suggests that practitioners of any given faith do not historically come to regard what they do as religion until they have developed a degree of cultural self-regard, causing them to see their collective spiritual practices and beliefs as in some way significantly different from the other. Religion in the contemporary sense of the word is for Smith the product of both identity politics and apologetics: A dialectic ensues, however. Religion as a systematic entity, as it emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is a concept of polemics and apologetics" p. By way of an etymological study of religion *religio*, in Latin , Smith further contends that the term, which at first and for most of the centuries denoted an attitude towards a relationship between God and man p. Whereas *religio* denoted personal piety , religion came to refer to an abstract entity or transcendental signifier which, Smith says, does not exist. He argues that the term as found in Lucretius and Cicero was internalized by the Catholic Church through Lactantius and Augustine. During the Middle Ages it was superseded by the term faith, which Smith favors by contrast. During 17th Century debates between Catholics and Protestants , religion begins to refer to an abstract system of beliefs, especially when describing an oppositional structure. Through the Enlightenment this concept is further reified, so that by the nineteenth century Hegel defines religion as *Begriff*, "a self-subsisting transcendent idea that unfolds itself in dynamic expression in the course of ever-changing history The anthropologist and writer on religion and post-colonial studies Talal Asad has said *The Meaning and End of Religion* is a modern classic and a masterpiece. *Pakistan as an Islamic State: Preliminary Draft* , Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, p. *Islam in Modern History*:

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Chapter 2 : The Meaning and End of Religion | Ahmed Afzaal

Wilfred Cantwell Smith (July 21, - February 7,) was a Canadian professor of comparative religion who from was director of Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions. The Harvard Gazette characterized him as one of the field's most influential figures of the past century.

In his work *The Meaning and End of Religion* he notably and controversially questioned the validity of the concept of religion. He received a B. In he obtained a Ph. From to Smith taught at Harvard Divinity School. He was also among the original Editorial Advisors of the scholarly journal *Dionysius*. In he returned to Harvard. In he received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University. After his retirement from teaching, he was appointed a senior research associate in the Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College, University of Toronto, in He died on February 7, *The Meaning and End of Religion* In his best known and most controversial work, Smith contends that the concept of religion, rather than being a universally valid category as is generally supposed, is a peculiarly European construct of recent origin. Religion, he argues, is a static concept that does not adequately address the complexity and flux of religious lives. Instead of the concept of religion, Smith proffers a new conceptual apparatus: Other than the Prophet Mani, only the Prophet Muhammad was conscious of the establishment of a religion. Smith points out that the Arabic language does not have a word for religion, strictly speaking: The terms for major world religions today, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, did not exist until the 19th century. Smith suggests that practitioners of any given faith do not historically come to regard what they do as religion until they have developed a degree of cultural self-regard, causing them to see their collective spiritual practices and beliefs as in some way significantly different from the other. Religion in the contemporary sense of the word is for Smith the product of both identity politics and apologetics: A dialectic ensues, however. Religion as a systematic entity, as it emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is a concept of polemics and apologetics" p. By way of an etymological study of religion *religio*, in Latin , Smith further contends that the term, which at first and for most of the centuries denoted an attitude towards a relationship between God and man p. Whereas *religio* denoted personal piety, religion came to refer to an abstract entity or transcendental signifier which, Smith says, does not exist. He argues that the term as found in Lucretius and Cicero was internalized by the Catholic Church through Lactantius and Augustine. During the Middle Ages it was superseded by the term faith, which Smith favors by contrast. During 17th Century debates between Catholics and Protestants, religion begins to refer to an abstract system of beliefs, especially when describing an oppositional structure. Through the Enlightenment this concept is further reified, so that by the nineteenth century Hegel defines religion as *Begriff*, "a self-subsisting transcendent idea that unfolds itself in dynamic expression in the course of ever-changing history The anthropologist and writer on religion and post-colonial studies Talal Asad has said *The Meaning and End of Religion* is a modern classic and a masterpiece. Works *Modern Islam in India: Pakistan as an Islamic State: Preliminary Draft* , Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, p. *Islam in Modern History: Essays* , HarperCollins paperback: Selected Studies editor, , The Hague: ISBN , reprint: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion Macmillan paperback: A Comparative Approach, Fortress Press

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Chapter 3 : Wilfred Cantwell Smith - Wikipedia

For two or three thousand years now, and in many cultures and civilizations, communities have treated particular texts in a strikingly special way. the notion scripture has been called into service to cover the several instances.

Competing definitions[edit] Scholars have failed to agree on a definition of religion. There are however two general definition systems: The very attempt to define religion, to find some distinctive or possibly unique essence or set of qualities that distinguish the religious from the remainder of human life, is primarily a Western concern. The attempt is a natural consequence of the Western speculative, intellectualistic, and scientific disposition. It is also the product of the dominant Western religious mode, what is called the Judeo-Christian climate or, more accurately, the theistic inheritance from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The theistic form of belief in this tradition, even when downgraded culturally, is formative of the dichotomous Western view of religion. That is, the basic structure of theism is essentially a distinction between a transcendent deity and all else, between the creator and his creation, between God and man. We just know that it is done, annually, weekly, daily, for some people almost hourly; and we have an enormous ethnographic literature to demonstrate it. He also emphasized the cultural reality of religion, which he defined as [â€] the entirety of the linguistic expressions, emotions and, actions and signs that refer to a supernatural being or supernatural beings. They define religion as [â€] a relatively-bounded system of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence, and in which communion with others and Otherness is lived as if it both takes in and spiritually transcends socially-grounded ontologies of time, space, embodiment and knowing. When more or less distinct patterns of behavior are built around this depth dimension in a culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically recognizable form. Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experienceâ€”varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the envioning culture. He also argued that the belief in spiritual beings exists in all known societies. In his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the psychologist William James defined religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine". Sacred things are not, however, limited to gods or spirits. These social constructionists argue that religion is a modern concept that developed from Christianity and was then applied inappropriately to non-Western cultures. While few would dispute that the concept of religion does have a historical genealogy, there is some disagreement about what the Western origin of the term has meant historically. Some such as Tomoko Masuzawa have felt that the equation of religion with Christianity had the effect of diminishing other traditions, especially in the study of comparative religions as it developed during the high point of Western imperialism. Daniel Dubuisson, a French anthropologist, argues that the idea of religion has changed a lot over time and that one cannot fully understand its development by relying on consistent use of the term, which "tends to minimize or cancel out the role of history". Dubuisson says that, with the emergence of religion as a category separate from culture and society, there arose religious studies. The initial purpose of religious studies was to demonstrate the superiority of the living or universal European world view to the dead or ethnic religions scattered throughout the rest of the world, expanding the teleological project of Schleiermacher and Tiele to a worldwide ideal religiousness. As Christianity became commonplace, the charismatic authority identified by Augustine, a quality we might today call religiousness, exerted a commanding influence at the local level. As the Catholic Church lost its dominance during the Protestant Reformation and Christianity became closely tied to political structures, religion was recast as the basis of national sovereignty, and religious identity gradually became a less universal sense of spirituality and more divisive, locally defined, and tied to nationality. However, there was not yet the idea of dogma as a personal choice, only of established churches. With the Enlightenment religion lost its attachment to nationality, says Fitzgerald, but rather than becoming a universal social attitude, it now became a personal feeling or emotion. This idea can be found in the writings of St. Christianity was then a power structure

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opposing and superseding human institutions, a literal Kingdom of Heaven. In the Age of Enlightenment, Balagandhara argues that the idea of Christianity as the purest expression of spirituality was supplanted by the concept of religion as a worldwide practice. Much like Christianity, the idea of religious freedom was exported around the world as a civilizing technique, even to regions such as India that had never treated spirituality as a matter of political identity. Instead they worked to interpret religion and its boundaries strategically to meet their own agendas and staged these new meanings for a global audience. In summary, Josephson argues that the European encounter with other cultures has led to a partial de-Christianization of the category religion. Hence religion has come to refer to a confused collection of traditions with no possible coherent definition.

Chapter 4 : Wilfred Cantwell Smith Research Papers - www.nxgvision.com

Professor Smith's self-appointed task is that of thinking about the meaning of "scripture" in human experience and history, not only Jewish or Christian history. The work is challenging not only because of the size of the task or the complexity of.

Chapter 5 : The Meaning and End of Religion by Wilfred Cantwell Smith () Pdf Book ePub - www.nxgvision.com

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Chapter 7 : Project MUSE - Reading Renunciation

In the end, Smith's creative proposal is valuable not only for showing what it means to hold a text as sacred, or to treasure another's scripture, but also for the light it sheds in a troubled culture on what it means to be human.

Chapter 8 : Definition of religion - Wikipedia

Wilfred Cantwell Smith's personal religious heritage was a combination of Presbyterian and Methodist Christian traditions and both these traditions affected his later intellectual pursuit a great deal.

Chapter 9 : The Meaning and End of Religion by Wilfred Cantwell Smith

Acknowledgments. Introduction: Rethinking Scripture Miriam Levering. 1. The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible Wilfred Cantwell Smith. 2. Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World.