

According to Geertz's analysis, a religion always includes both a metaphysic and a style of life—or, as we can say, a morality. Why is this so?

Because, I would say, religion understood precisely as Geertz understands it—as “a cultural system,” i.e., a system of concepts and symbols—is the explication of basic faith in the ultimate meaning or worth of life. It lies in the nature of such basic faith “to affirm that the real whole of which we experience ourselves to be parts is such as to be worthy of, and thus itself to evoke that very confidence. The word ‘God,’ provides the designation for whatever it is about the experienced whole that calls forth and justifies our original and inescapable trust . . .” (RG: 37). Because faith itself thus affirms its objective ground in the very act of affirming itself as a way of existing, no religion purporting to make such faith explicit could possibly do so without implying both a metaphysics and a morality, so related that they imply one another, the metaphysics implying the morality as uniquely appropriate to the way things really are, the morality implying the metaphysics as uniquely realistic given the style of life that the morality sets forth.

But, then, the explanation of seeing christology and soteriology as a unity is analogous. Provided christology explicates the explicit primal ontic source of all that is implicitly authorized by ultimate reality itself in its meaning for us, christology, too, necessarily implies moral actions as well as metaphysical beliefs.

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