

The concept of "substantial agreement" needs to be sorted out. Or, better, I need to get my thoughts about this concept sorted out.

My thought has been, of course, that substantial agreement in matters religious consists in substantial agreement in self-understanding and/or understanding of existence. Thus, if, or insofar as, two religions express the same self-understanding and/or understanding of existence, they substantially agree.

But, on my own account, religion and, therefore, *a* religion are not matters simply of self-understanding and/or understanding of existence, because religion, properly understood, is the primary form of culture, or "cultural system," through whose concepts and symbols the existential question is explicitly asked and answered and life-praxis is mediated accordingly. But, then, two forms of the same religion substantially agree because, or insofar as, they not only express the same self-understanding, but also make or imply the same constitutive assertion, and thus have the same explicit primal ontic source of authority. (Question: Do they also have to have the same primary authority, or is this one of the things in which they may differ even while being the same?)

In the terms of William A. Christian's analysis, one could say that they agree substantially because, or insofar as, they point to the same illuminating suggestion, including the same vehicle thereof, and make or imply the same basic proposal.

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