

# What to do with "them"

Some notes toward  
a concept-discussion  
tomorrow

1 "I" originated from "them" (my parents) & am apart from them; but in the family, they & I are "we," not apart from one another but each a part of the family. As singular, "I" am apart from both "we" & "they"--as plural, "we" are apart from "them." As a mediator/reconciler, "I" am apart from both "us" & "them" on behalf of a new "we" inclusive of both.

Psychology, individual & social, studies these facts with a view to understanding & improving the human condition. Since improving the human condition is also in what we might call the mission statement of religion, the two may either cooperate with or cannibalize one another--&, on the hoof, do both.

2 This Thinksheet's title **assumes**....

....a "we." "What [are we] to do with 'them'?" This "we" is (1) Christians, specifically (2) the Christians who'll be in the concept-discussion group tomorrow. Another specific: the concept to be discussed is "they," under the aspect of several specific appositional/oppositional other groupings.

...."they" as others who see themselves as "we" & see us as a "they."

....that we have power to do something with them, in two senses:

...."with" meaning in cooperation with, &

...."with" meaning despite their will (e.g., "our" Taliban prisoners on Guantanamo, & the presence of a U.S. military base on the island of Cuba).

3 We are always here whether they are there, both there & here, or here. Close/far--the distance factor--is a factor in how we treat them, what we do with them. At a far "safe" distance, we may do nothing directly with/for/to them, & may be more or less unaware of our indirect influences on them. (For this Thinksheet, they do nothing, are passive; we are active vis-a-vis them.)

4 What I/we do with (have influence on) them depends partly on the particular nature or quality of **the I/we relationship**, how the I & the we see one another--the individual I & the collective (not the distributive) we. In biblical story, we (as fe/male) produced every human I except Ada/Eve (direct, navel-less creations--who, outside this story, are given navels on the great bronze entry doors of Cape Cod's 5th-century-basilica church of the Community of Jesus) & Jesus (the God-man as unique product of heaven-Father & earth-mother). Thus, in biblical story, I as vertical (i.e., in relation to God) has priority over both we & they collectives, of which some I's are personal symbols (esp. Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Jesus, Peter, John, Paul). (In computerese, I is the human default-position, on which "programs" can be run.) See (1) "Every Person an Altar" (Thinksheet #3134) & (2) my FLOW OF FLESH [through the human generations], REACH OF SPIRIT [every I in every generation reaching up: I as vertical].

5 This brings us to some concerns both prior & related to "what to do with 'them'": what do I/we do with me/us? Jesus willingly dies "for us," to save us (he is Victor, Conqueror of sin/death/satan); but also as Victim (on Gamaliel's worldly wisdom & political strategem that occasionally some Jew may have to be thrown to the Roman oppressors for death). The biblical principle: While individuals may sacrifice themselves as means to a beneficent social end, societies are not so to use individuals.

6 The existential fact is that all three angles (I/we/they) on the human triangle are *simultaneously* in inter/action. But of course, do you say, so why bother to remark it? Because (as Edwin Abbott in FLATLAND said 1¼ centuries ago in another connection) a triangle seen on edge is only a straight line, **the third angle concealed**. Draw a triangle & mark the angles "G"(od), "I," & "we": Clergyman Abbott, in the generation after Darwin, was concerned about the collapse of the third dimension (in my diagram, God at the triangle's apex): England was in process of becoming what it today largely is, viz. God-amnesiac. We can somewhat improve society, reduce the others-hurting edges, by aspiring

to be a circle--then, by revelation ("vision"), entering into Spaceland by becoming a globe ("Spaceland" being the third-dimensional realm of communion with God). Note that when this triangle is seen on the I-we edge, G disappears & "we" shrivel down from being all people "under God" to being a slice of humanity under the delusion that it's the whole (tribe therefore angling tribe).

Now draw another triangle, this one with "I" where "God" is on the other triangle, viz. the apex--& mark the other angles "we" & "they." Now view the triangle on, successively, the three edges--& use this three-way **model** for thinking/praying about, e.g., Israel/Palestinians & Iraq "preemption" & RELATING TO PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS: What Every Christian Needs to Know (the title of Thom.Tangaraj's 1997 Abingdon book on the possibilities):

- a "We [Christians] know and they know not"--exclusivists
- b "What we have is good for us; what they have is good for them"--relativists (the postmodern view that truth is only "relative," not absolute)
- c "We know in full; they know in part"--preparationists
- d "We know and know that we know; they know and know not that they know"--anonomists (Karl Rahner's "anonymous Christians")
- e "We and they need to know more"--Christians who witness "the love of God [they] have come to see in the face of Jesus the Christ" with humility, "gentleness and reverence" (Tom's spirit, as I can witness from his presence overnight in our home, while I read his "Jesus as Guru" manuscript --thereafter submitted for his Harvard PhD)....S.Mark Heim, in his THE DEPTHS OF THE RICHES: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends (Eerdmans/01), is similarly irenic: "God has freely forsaken the role of being the only decider. But the destiny of creation as a whole is not out of God's hands....There are real alternative futures, but in each of them all the religious ends of humanity will glorify God, and will be rooted in the same salvific purpose of God."

7 "What to do about 'them'?" We could (a) live & let live if they leave us alone; (b) help them (charity, "foreign aid"); (c) remove them (Cherokee "Vale of Tears"); (d) kill them (Turks against Armenians; Stalin against kulaks; Hitler against Jews+); (e) dilute them (Assyrians create "Samaria"); (f) colonize them by invasion or infiltration; (g) liberate (decolonize) them; (h) merge with them by marriage & religious syncretism; (i, a sign in the Craigville dininghall) "Tell all the children I love them.--[signed] God."

"What to do with 'them'" when claims clash: (1) #3112, "...Land Sovereignty"; (2) #3117, "Muhammad Bows to Jesus."

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