

When Darkness Falls

INVESTIGATING RELIGION'S HISTORY OF EVIL

Part 3: The Inquisition

To put it mildly, it is a disturbing fact that we humans, throughout the history of our species, have always been ready to kill and torture other humans in the name of an eternal and everlasting deity that (in most religions) encourages humans to love and tolerate one another.

Robert Buchman Can We Be Good Without God?

Religion is a falcon with which to hunt.

~ Ancient Arab Proverb

I admit that the decision to inflict punishment in spiritual matters is occasion for trembling and darkness.

~ Augustine (354 – 430 C.E.)

Church history exposes repeatedly the gap between the ideal as exemplified in the teachings of Jesus and the way Christians have lived and actually behaved.

~ Charles Kimball, When Religion Becomes Evil

The church created the Inquisition, not only to execute heretics but to subject them to deliberate and prolonged torture. In driving out one devil the church opened the door for seven others.

~ Bruce L. Shelley, Church History In Plain Language

Bodily torture has been found the most salutary and efficient means of leading to spiritual repentance.

~ Pope Innocent IV, 1252

Wretched creatures are compelled by the severity of the torture to confess things they have never done... and so by the cruel butchery innocent lives are taken.

~ Father Cornelius Loos, 1592

They dug up the dead heretic Galvan and took him from the cemetery where he had been buried, then in great procession dragged his body through the town and then burned it. This was done in praise of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the honour of the Roman and Catholic Church, our mother.

~ William Pelhisson, Dominican Inquisitor, 1231

How could this be? How could the followers of Jesus do to the living what the ancients had done to Christ: condemning him as a heretic in a show trial and sentencing him to a death of deliberate agony? How could such unspeakable pain be inflicted in the name of a faith that adored the Lamb?

~ Brian Moynahan, The Faith: A History of Christianity

Jesus challenged and was executed by the domination system of his time; many Christians today proclaim the Christ of faith while conforming to, embracing, and receiving rewards from the domination system of our time. Jesus invites us out of that domination system and into an alternative community where abundant life is experienced.

~ Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, Jesus Against Christianity

Even for the most noble causes (like Peter protecting Jesus on the night of His arrest), our Lord vetoes violence. Jesus is not seeking victories that injure and destroy people, but victories in which love overcomes evil.

~ Brethren In Christ, Accents & Issues: Violence

My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting.

~ JESUS before Pilate, John 18:36