

Patrick H Gormley

Why Christianity is Useless

Christianity is useless.

To say that seems too negative and extreme. Let us see.

Mormon founder Joseph Smith said Jesus in a vision did not think so: "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time."

Jesus in the gospels says, "You unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?" and "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions." And, "when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Many atheists insist that in the past, the good works and scientific discoveries attributed to Christians were a case of where and people had to say they were Christian to get the chance to make those achievements. Christians state that the atheists are keen to say Christianity has committed many atrocities and has done much harm but they are unwilling to praise its good points. They see this as a double-standard.

It is not.

Christians say when Christians do wrong they are considered to be real Christians and when they do right they are really just fake or nominal Christians. This means that the Christians can deny that Christians ever do wrong for those that do cease to be Christian until they repent! They don't allow for the possibility the atheist doing wrong is not acting as an atheist.

And it does not follow that just because Christians do good that means Christianity has done good. People and their faith are two distinct things.

We should attribute the good done by Christians to their humanity not their religion for Christians are no better or worse than pagans.

Here is an example of how Christians think.

PERSON A, Christianity torments disturbed people by telling them that we can go to Hell to suffer forever when we die.
PERSON B, But the nuns were so good to me and that is why I am so devoted to the Church.

In translation, this means I am going to ignore the fact that Christianity is dangerous teaching just because the nuns were kind to me. A religion that cultivates such hypocrisy and self-delusion is to be avoided. Also, the nuns being good is not the same thing as the Church being good. Should we overlook the evil and concentrate on the good? The supporters of the Nazis thought we should and look what happened there! The nuns desecrate any good they do by holding on to the unnecessary evil of bad religion. The more unnecessary the evil the more polluted the good is. Clergy and representatives of the Church are only good and nice in so far as they ignore or don't know their religion.

Christians even when they claim to be fundamentalist are still picking and choosing what they like out of Christ's teaching. They love themselves not him. They consider themselves to be better gods than him for they sit in judgement over what he supposedly taught. The good done by people who call themselves Christians is done in spite of Christianity and not because of it.

The doctrine that failing to love God totally is the greatest sin meaning that even if a sin of theft is small the sin associated with it such as failure to love God certainly is not puts an impossible burden of guilt on people. The Christians only pretend

to believe this doctrine.

The doctrine that sin is a disorder but sinners are not disordered is just a lie.

Christianity is a tough love religion for Jesus had a very sharp tongue. Christians are usually sickly sweet.

The New Testament says Christians are to consider themselves to be one body or one vine in Christ meaning that if somebody sins it hurts other people invisibly even if it is a totally secret sin meaning it is everybody's business whatever you do. Christians ignore this teaching.

The believer says that even if Christianity leads to trouble and strife it doesn't always and I am in it because it has a good side for it is not religion that is dangerous but people.

Believers say that the terrible things I write about religion, as does Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, could one day lead to atheists persecuting Christians.

Many Christians claim that they do not follow a religion but follow Christ. They are spiritual individual - each one is his own religion and spiritual matters are between him and the saviour Jesus Christ. Such Christians have no difficulty in saying that religion is dangerous or a problem.

Churches that practice excommunication say that excommunication is merely an official statement that a person has left the faith. For example, if a Catholic bishop starts preaching that the pope is not the successor of Jesus' apostle Peter he will be excommunicated. The Church says that excommunication is really a declaration that the person has excommunicating herself or himself. It does not cause the expulsion but merely announces it. To say then that the Catholics who tortured victims of the Inquisition are not excommunicated or have not separated from the faith and the Church is to declare that the Church gives some sanction to what they do or does not take it seriously.

The good done by Christianity is generally and largely non-humanitarian. By that I mean the religion is for praying and worshipping and teaching doctrine while doing good is a sideline. Worse, it refuses to apologise for how Jesus condoned and even blessed the evil and murderous violence against children and women commanded by his God in the Old Testament. This evil is not even considered a serious matter by parents or priests or schools! They still try to impose the faith on others by manipulation or half-truth. We all accept that it is not enough to believe certain terrible actions are absolutely necessary and what would fit more in that category than: "God has a good reason for allowing all this evil and temptation and suffering"? You need to know why. The doctrine smoothes it for evil people who dress up their schemes as good or serving a good purpose. When religion says God has a plan it really means the people have this plan whether they realise it or not and it is them who will bring it about. God's plan is a plan about people so it ends up being about the people. The notion that evil leads to good or can do is where tyranny starts. It is safer to reject the concept until you see proof. How could religion be about helping people when you don't need and don't often use religion for that? Consider the heroic effort put into saving unborn "babies" which is always done in preference to helping the homeless and the dying. And any humanitarian acts are done in collaboration with secular governments and systems and religion never helps people on its own. Something else does the helping and religion has to get involved otherwise its self-promotion will be impossible. Religion needs to use social systems and faculties in order to solidify its place in society and become part of the fabric. If you want people to come first then Christianity is not the religion for you. Religious people use religion and reason as excuses for getting what they want. Opposition to abortion can be understood as Christianity using religion and people's desire for religious faith as a means for promoting what it wants to believe. If people use religion as an excuse for violence it can be used as an excuse for other things too. Take all the religions collectively and see how good they are then. See the bigger picture and don't be distracted by propaganda about saints and don't let their fan-clubs distract you with noise. Religion is nothing special and that makes it toxic for acts like it is wonderful and especially good. Back to abortion. The Church spends a lot of time battling it but is that because it provides a placebo for evil and thus cannot succeed and does not care? It is just about self-promotion. The Church's work becomes a clever substitute for doing good.

Useful is an atheist word. We ask how useful something is for us and we want even faith in God to be only important if it helps and betters us as humans. Christians instead of helping the sick baby for the baby's sake help the baby as a manifestation of God. It is made about God. Jesus made this clear when he said to help another person is not to help them but him. Understand this - that is to be taken very seriously.

The Cambridge Companion to Atheism, edited by Michael Martin, Cambridge, New York, 2007
Is Religion Irrational? Keith Ward, Lion Books, Oxford, 2011