

DANGERS OF RELIGION

Religion thrives on making out it is not all bad when religious terrorism happens. It laps it up when the papers say the same thing. The not all bad thinking purposely denies that you may subtly make another feel safe about doing evil and be even more to blame than he or she is. To think that way proves your religion is all bad for its indirect or perhaps unrecognised role and not wanting to admit it makes it bad.

Faith in God is a bad habit or based on one. For that reason it leads to faith in much more. It leads to faith in dangerous people and things and to being manipulated for it gives a weak spot for others to work on. Even if God can justify evil faith is not enough for us to think he can. You have no right to tell a cancer patient what chemo she should have and get her to act on it. Faith does not give you the right to have faith that evil and suffering should be permitted or what the remedy is. That is a matter for very strong hard evidence. Its not about you for most suffering is not yours. Evidence is your friend. Let nothing come between you and your friend.

Believers in a particular know that religion can be dangerous and they fear their own religion which causes them to fear others. Consider the hatred between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Harmful religion can be compared to the smoker. Most people feel that if you want to smoke that is up to you. But what they object to is having to pay taxes for your medical care and suffering the other consequences of your habit. They do not want to be passive smokers over you. In the same way, unbelievers argue that they don't want to be passive "believers" or passive religionists either. Religion often has an innate bullying nature. Unbelievers have to be defensive in the face of religion rather than aggressive for religion will usurp all the rights it can at their expense. For example, unbelievers are forced to pray in many public schools.

Religious faith is bad for your mental health. Even harmless religious faith is not entirely harmless. Its embracing supernatural concepts and once you believe in any of that you can believe in anything! It opens the door to further harm. Every victim of a religious bully or con-artist started off with mild or moderate beliefs and then ended up absorbing toxic religious doctrine.

The Church dwells little on justifying its ethical teaching. It tends to just give commands. Priests spend hours every week reading the breviary, a book of prayers and readings. The breviary like the Bible gives people no help in forming moral decisions. They just preach. We need the tools to work out what is moral for nothing is simple or straightforward. It is evil to tell somebody they should not commit adultery. What they need to be told is why its wrong or inadvisable. Christians worship with the rubbish in the breviary and the Bible and they think they feel more virtuous after doing so. That virtue is really too inner. It's selfish. What about applying that virtue to difficult moral situations? Virtue when preferred to discovering and promoting the tools of discernment of real morality is really a vice and the more one adores it the more hypocritical one becomes.

If the Devil makes a religion, he will make it give good commandments but the religion will promote them in such a way that there will be little success. The poor obedience among Catholics is shocking. Ponder on that if you believe in the Devil! Satan has to make his religion look good but its poison is insidious. It is made to look like lemonade. The evil will take hold gradually to get the person hooked on it.

Religion makes people think leopards do change their spots - e.g. dramatic changes from sinner to saint. Eg Jesus' doctrine that we can be born again - become a new person. Atheists know that it takes time for people to change and regain trust.

Religion attracts dishonest people and cheats. Look how easily all the saintly bishops who knew of clerical child abuse lied about it. No Atheist makes money out of alleged healing powers and miracles and prayer books. Religion does.

It leads people to do dotty things. Eg, drinking filthy water at holy wells. The Atheist is the last person who would do that. At Medjugorje, you will be encouraged to risk eye damage and gaze at the sun.

It leads people to say dotty things. Eg, pope says a man must not protect his wife if he has AIDS with a condom because sex is about total self giving and yet he allows married couples to have sex though they do not see it as total self-giving. Atheists point out such hypocrisy and oppose it.

It leads people's to deceive themselves. Self-deception is wilful refusal to see the truth. Or more accurately, you know you are wrong but refuse to let yourself see it. We all practice self-deception in different things. We don't need religion to add to that problem.

It leads people to deceive others. Eg the self-deceiver promotes the faith to deceive others - his or her own children in particular. There is no real point in deceiving yourself just for the sake of fooling yourself . You fool yourself to fool others - to pull off your deception.

It leads to cruelty. Eg, Moses commanding the murders of certain offenders in the name of God. Atheists can command and have commanded murders in the name of men. The Atheists at least have less excuse for that. No man is that great that he should be obeyed when he wants people killed. In fact to act as if he should is really kind of religious. You must believe or feel at some level that he is divine and can supernaturally make wrong right. The killings are more counter-intuitive for the true Atheist. The fake atheist or weak atheist may not even realise that the belief in the supernatural means that it is possible that God may need you do to some seemingly awful things is in his heart.

It deliberately lies. For example, the pope saying that there is no room for violence in religion though his Jesus was violent in the Temple and urged us to hate sin. Hate is wishing violence and evil on something or someone.

It preys on people's fears about suffering and death in this world. The old are the best at attending Church.

It makes people fear what might happen after death. The sensible person would rather cease to exist at death than live on to be at risk of everlasting damnation.

It urges people to think this life is not as important as the next. The next is the goal. Also it is everlasting which makes it more important. To downgrade the importance of life in the world automatically implies that religious faith comes first even if it seriously hurts you and others.

It makes people self-aggrandize themselves. The believers talk about devotion to God but what they are really devoted to is the perception and image they have made of God. They think they have God on their side.

It makes people insecure and bigoted.

It causes needless division by being something extra to cause division, fear and bother as if we don't have enough as it is.

It has no genuine concern for those it helps. Believers say their faith may be weak one day and strong the next. The less they believe the more humanistic they become. It is their human nature that produces the good they do, not their belief in religion.

It puts faith before people though it likes to look helpful to them.

It corrupts the academic world by having its superstitions accredited. Accreditation should be about facts not theology.

It hails poverty though poverty leads to instability and hatred and resentment and often sectarianism

It teaches that if God's law seems to hurt people we are not seeing the full picture and the consequences are God's concern - it is up to him to make sure they justify the laws.

Many forms of religion such as Christianity say that it is more important to adhere to the beliefs and the ritual of the Church than to live a good life. The Catholics say that you can do what you like as long as you repent on your deathbed to escape damnation in Hell.

It denies that the most important beliefs should have outstanding evidence in their favour. You would need to see an example of somebody who is in Hell forever for he has made himself too bad to change before you can accuse anybody of having the potential to be that bad. That is one example of how unfair the Church is. Is Hell vindictive wishful thinking?

It denies the truth that teaching religion to children is a form of child abuse. Some say it is only child abuse if it undermines the child's right to freedom of thought and belief. But the right to truth is more important than the right to freedom of thought and belief. Indeed, if you had no right to truth it would make no sense to argue that you have the right of freedom of thought and belief.

Religion is disturbing when you consider the kind of questions it comes up with. It is appalling that people end up asking if babies are sinners. And how they ask if God can justly send you to Hell for everlasting punishment after you have masturbated. And how they wonder if it is it right to kill babies after their sin is removed in baptism so that we can send them to Heaven and they will have no risk of Hell. They consider believing and respecting the most appalling things. That in itself is unhealthy.

Religion appeals to emotion and has great potential for abuse so it is superstition.

Secularism is not a passive tolerance of religions. Rather, religion is treated as irrelevant and in this way all religions end up being treated as equals. Religious tolerance is always arrogant for it is about a person of one faith putting up with somebody of a different faith. The other person is not considered an equal.

The religious cannot believe in separating politics from religion. To ask for this to be done is to ask our public representatives to be hostile or disadvantageous to their own faith. Secularism is hostile to faith. Religious individuals are entitled to expect that the law be used to enforce their teachings.

Religious bodies can put forward their point of view but keep religion out of it. They are to be merely free to argue for their point of view on human and not religious or scripture grounds. But they must not be given any special rights to be consulted or to contribute to policy making which are not accorded to other private bodies.

Secularism respects religious belief but it does not give belief any special honour just because it is religious.

The law can force a sexist employer to hire a woman. It can force a racist firm to employ a black person even if the partners of the firm think it's a sin to be kind to blacks. Religious bodies are thought to agree with this legal overriding of conscience. This does not sit well with their claim that conscience takes priority and that nobody should be made to violate their conscience. Even if they did agree with the states action, they would have to disapprove of the non-religious or god-free motive behind the action.

Religionists say their religion should get special treatment and if Christians for example ban gay couples or unmarried couples from their bed and breakfasts, the law should permit it and not intervene. They are saying religious beliefs should get special rights that no other kind of belief gets. They are saying that the religious people should have more rights than the non-religious. Let there be one law for the religious and another for the person who does not follow religion.

Religion holds fast to its legal right to use state money to promote its doctrines. The state funds religious schools. This is an example of religion taking advantage of the state.

Religion despite the social and cultural aspects and its being a mark of identity is an ideology. Those who want the taxpayer to pay for the promotion of religion in schools forget that it is an ideology. Forgetting is not respectful to religion. If a religion is an ideology then to forget that is not doing the religion any favours. Nor is it respecting it.

Many think that the Christian belief that homosexual conduct is sinful is a belief worthy of respect in democratic society as long as this belief is expressed peacefully and not intended to inflame hatred. Now a religion that urges people to hate sin and to regard homosexuality as an abomination is not expressing its belief peacefully. Christians say you should not respect the notion that it is wrong to drink cows milk or to tolerate anybody else doing so. Yet they want respect for their assumption that gay sex is always seriously wrong. The true Christian cannot then say that if people think gay sex need not be bad but holy this view must be respected. To say that is disrespecting his own faith.

Most people in a religion make up their own minds though it is not allowed. Thus religion can and should be done without. And especially so when it is dangerous.