

Faith is bad for it can be the key to violence so easily. It is also bad for it often is the key.

If you submit to a higher power in faith be it luck or God, you are letting it impose on you and by extension on other people. You are a social creature and what happens to you will affect somebody else. Imposing is low level violence and it is always how the gate to something worse is opened.

Religion is manipulative for as it depends on people bringing it its babies as members and giving it money and a hearing it cannot let its love of violence be too obvious.

Witches are believed to want to believe in magic because rather than accept what comes in life and what cannot be changed they want to harm enemies secretly by occult means. Pity a study was not done to see to what extent prayer attracts believers who want to use it for the same reason.

Religion needs to be measured for passive aggression. Here is how it can use that aggression to cause a lust for war and use it in a crafty way while pretending to be all for peace.

By giving us something we don't need, do you need prayers as much as you need clean water?, as if there is not already enough for people to fall out over and accuse each other of stupidity and lying over.

By giving people an identity that is different from others leading to an us versus them approach. (Religion is often far more a matter of identity than it is a matter of beliefs and practices. That is why even those who have barely any religious belief will still wage war to promote Islam or Christianity. People of different countries can slaughter and hate each other over identity. Religion is another excuse as if we don't have enough trouble with patriotism.) When Catholics, for example, have a problem with Islamist fanatics, the Catholics will see themselves as defending themselves against an enemy. It is more about us versus them than about the Islamists' behaviour. Their behaviour serves as a trigger for the us versus them mentality that is the one essential when you want people to start a religious war. Bad behaviour then in one religion leads to psychological attraction to inter-faith violence in others. The problem with those who say "us versus them" is bad is that nobody can get on with everybody or every group. And it PRETENDS to assume we can and should all get along though we know it cannot be done. Those who say a religion cannot be condemned for the evil actions of a few members are creating an us versus them. The them will comprise those who know that religion has to be blamed for helping the evil to happen by failing to attract the members effectively towards goodness.

By teaching that evil violent books are God's word - a religion that does no harm but which promotes scriptures that advocate harm in the name of God is still to blame for the actions of those who decide to obey those scriptures. If it calls them extremists then it is just being do-gooderish and hypocritical. If you carry out violence for you feel that your scripture says violence for God is not a big deal, then you are NOT AN EXTREMIST for your interpretation could be correct! The extremist label is often used to make out that the violent are distorting their religion and that there is no violence authorised in the religion's scriptures. The violent would only feel encouraged when people are so hypocritical.

By not encouraging or helping people to care about religious truth. For example, Catholics have mostly history based doctrines that are controversial and children are carted to the baptism font without their parents being allowed to make an informed decision. Religion is not based on suitable evidence which is why holy books with evil rules and good rules will cause people to do harm ideas and doctrines become very flexible when there is no evidence to help you interpret them. They are still forcing you to consider an evil interpretation and maybe follow it. Even the Quakers as peaceful as they are are giving you that choice by giving you the Bible.

By insinuating that even if faith inspired violence is forbidden, it is not that evil as God has commanded it in the past. Some Christian and Muslim groups are fond of bloodletting. If they are behaving contrary to the Christian or Muslim religion, the fact remains that the God speaking in the Old Testament and the Koran and Muslim tradition authorises violence. That leads to the sects thinking, "Okay let us endorse and dish out this violence. If we are wrong, it is not that big of a deal for violence is endorsed by God in the scriptures anyway." And it does not matter if the sect is authentically Christian/Muslim or not.

What matters is that it claims to be a religion and we should take it at its word. Is the religious attitude the problem? Is religion the problem? Is the sect merely a symptom of what religion does to people's heads? Does "good" religion pose a risk? Is it luck or forces external to the religion that we have to thank when nothing has happened?

By teaching that other religions are the enemy. Religion often says it only intends to over people a uplifting message of divine love and does not intend to offend or down other religions. But what is claimed to be the best in terms of spirituality

or morals or doctrine by default does down other systems. Moreover, if you are Christian and you think you have the only true religion, you will feel that God is on your side as you wage war against another religion, especially one that is nearly completely different. The Christian Church teaches that war is only fair if you feel and think God approves!

By teaching that evil is good that is not good enough. The Church has always taught that evil is a lack - evil is good but not as good as it can be. The Church says that evil is not real and that is the basic reason why you can believe in an all-good and all-powerful God though terrible evil exists. The downside of the doctrine is that evil so often can easily pass for good or good can easily pass for evil. How can you trust yourself or anybody else in difficult situations such as when the question arises, "Do we need to declare war and would it be for the best?" The doctrine easily leads to evil warmongers passing themselves off as tortured saints.

By teaching that God has the right to take responsibility for violence by letting it take place thus if God commands violence we must obey for he knows best and he uses evil to bring good out of it. All who have engaged in holy war have believed this. Though God can be used as an excuse for war, it is plain that the God concept in itself implies that war for God might be necessary. God is by definition the power that turns evil around and who uses evil to make us better people. Now atheists can fight harder and be more keen on blood letting if they think or feel the war they wage will result in much good. They tell themselves that their goals and intentions are good and that spurs them on to greater evil doing and cruelty. If atheists can be like that, the risk is greater that a religious person will think or feel they are doing good by waging war than an atheist will. The reason is that the religious person feels God approves and blesses and accompanies him. So faith in God can lead to warmongering easier than atheism would and can lead to warmongering that surpasses atheist warmongering in brutality.

By teaching that as man is corrupt and prone to error and godlessness we must fight for God to safeguard the truth

By ordering you to feel and believe you are certain that the religion is true and others are false when you are not. Many religions treat faith as an epistemology. That is, they argue that faith is some sort of supernatural revelation to you about what is true. Thus faith is seen as knowledge. This implies that you are not only to see your religion's teaching as certain but also to FEEL that it is totally certain. Thinking something is certain when it is not is lying to yourself so that you can fool others better. It is hard to lie unless you lie to yourself first. And once you start treating opinions and beliefs as having the same force as facts do that is dangerous. It is the one thing you have to do so that a fanatic can brainwash and influence you. Those who feel certain of what is not certain know it deep down and tend to become bullies towards those who know the real truth and those who can rip off the mask. Blaming politics or culture or authoritarianism when religious people do grave evil instead of the religion overlooks the fact that it is only persons who believe they can and do know things magically or psychically (some religions claim that belief in them is supernaturally infused in you by God) who can get attached enough to policies and doctrines enough so that they would start a war for them. Blaming anything more than or instead of the religious impulse is unwittingly supporting the fanatics. It stops good people from doing anything about the problem for they misdiagnose the cause. A religion's teaching that its version of religious faith is a source not of belief but of knowledge leads only to disputes for other religions that contradict it will be teaching that they are the ones with the truth. They say they know God and what his ways are. Roman Catholicism teaches that faith is certainty. The Nazis even at their worst could never have been that arrogant. You can't claim to know when you are merely believing unless you believe in a magical God who is revealing the truths to you and helping you to see they are true. Religion, however benign it seems, is paving the way for arrogance and evil and intolerance worse than the Nazis could have ever dreamed of.

By teaching that you must follow your conscience even if it is mistaken for you have to follow the best light you have. William Lane Craig wrote, "To say...that the Holocaust was objectively wrong is to say that it was wrong even though the Nazis who carried it out thought that it was right". Christians like Craig then won't admit it but they would agree that it is objectively wrong to make people disobey their erring consciences and it is also objectively wrong for the Nazis to do what they did. So it follows that if you stop the Nazis you consider this regrettable for it is interfering with their consciences.

By programming you or unduly influencing you to believe. When a religion takes advantage of you to get you to believe, the end result is not faith but a semblance of it. You believe because the religion played games with your mind so your belief is you not being fully yourself. It is not real belief at all or it is mainly not real belief. It makes you believe because you want to. Those who believe in religion because they want to instead of caring for the truth are better at seeing this flaw in members of other religions than in themselves and that leads to sectarianism and terrorism and inter-religious hatred. They see no point in trying to reason with people who only believe what they want so persecution seems to be the only answer especially if those people are seen as a threat in some way. If Muslims see Christians as irrational and as a threat they will destroy them for they will see little point in attempting dialogue with people who only care about what they want to believe.

By teaching that the Holy Spirit live inside you and guides you to interpret the Bible. This means what you think the Holy Spirit comes first even if it is not the Holy Spirit or even if there is no Holy Spirit. And what if there is a Holy Spirit and he is not in you at all? This doctrine that one is one's own prophet makes a hypocrite of you if you claim that you follow only

the Bible. As the Bible God does endorse violence, private interpretation and the hypocrisy and lies it involves can lead to you thinking you should wage war for God. President Bush did that! Innocent lives in Iraq were lost as a result. The Koran does not claim that God must live in you to help you interpret the book. It leaves you to decide your own interpretation. That means the Muslim of peace has no right to criticise the Muslim who endorses a bloodthirsty interpretation. The moderate Muslims are enablers by principle whether they mean to be or not.

By teaching that evil godless nations deserve destruction for they only draw their citizens into everlasting suffering in Hell, the place of eternal punishment for sin. The Bible God threatened Israel with retribution if it failed to keep all his commands which included the law that certain sinners such as heretics and false prophets and fortune tellers and homosexuals must be tortured to death by stoning. Jesus demanded devotion to the Bible's version of God and claimed to be his only Son. He claimed that those who sin risk eternal torture in Hell forever. Christians say that the torture there is self-inflicted but not a word of the Bible so much as hints at that. It is God's torture chamber for the Bible clearly teaches that God is okay with torture as long as you act on his orders.

By teaching that the wrongness of fighting for God is reduced and made more tolerable because it is done for God. So war over oil is intolerable and unjust but if it is over God then it is not as bad. It is not as bad for the same reason as terrorism is not as bad if it is done because you love your leader than if you do it to get money. It is not justified but it is less bad.

By being religion. Religion unlike everything else has to be totally pacifist and that is the only thing that restrains the violent urge. If it ever condones violence at all it creates a slippery slope we could do without for there is enough. The problem indicates that there is something that religion does to people to make them tend to violence.

By accepting (and thus enabling) war mongers as full members of the faith. In Catholicism, you are barred from communion and the Vatican bank for atheism but not for war-mongering.

By being a form of culture. Things like honour killing among Muslims may be described as a cultural problem and not a religious one. All agree that culture can be religious but few realise that religion is simply a different kind of culture. It is culture when it claims to be sanctioned by God. It is fashionable to say that culture can cause divisions and hatred between nations. Culture and religion are both dangerous. Religious culture is worse than secular culture for the latter should at least in principle be willing to learn and improve for it does not claim to have backing from God and the supernatural. If culture says the bride must wear blue, that is not as harmful as when the culture says God will hurt her if she doesn't so she must wear it. The latter is pretending that the man-made rules of culture are made by God and must not be questioned even if they cause fear and intimidate.

By prayer. Petitionary prayer is making yourself feel you have done good when you have not - you ask God to do the work and you feel good about that or you feel good simply because you prayed. Traumatized people feel a lot better if they talk to somebody so prayer can be trying to deal with how you feel about somebody's suffering and the result is you are under a placebo. Worship is bad for it is unduly risking praising God for wrongly letting people suffer. People who like prayer get the buzz. That is why they like prayer. It has led to the extraordinary spectacle of terrorists * and abortionist Catholics coping with the evil they do by saying prayers. Prayer is a placebo for evil-doing. Evil Muslims who have killed and maimed over Islam are portrayed as bad Muslims who are only pretending to act in the name of their faith. And this despite the fact that they pray often and pray during their time in jail and express no repentance. They still have a religious motivation.

By advocating a way to feel in control instead of feeling subject to blind and perhaps harmful forces. The believer in God feels that God will let things happen that will hurt him or her. So he or she deals with this by accepting the will of God and this wins a sense of being in control. It has been noted by many that really good people turn evil when they feel safe enough to do the evil they want to do. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Feeling God is with you is the ultimate way to feel you are absolutely safe and thus that you as good as have absolute power.

By advocating the notion that suffering produces virtue or should be turned into a means of being a better person. Seeing yourself as helping the people you persecute when you make them suffer is dangerous. It enables religious war. It acts as a placebo for the conscience. The more you kill the easier it will become to justify it in your head. If there is a God then he will help everybody to grow through suffering. People can grow through suffering even if there is no God. So atheists too can persecute thinking that if the victims don't use their agony to grow in virtue it is their own fault. But the difference is that if there is a God it is everybody's fault if they don't use their suffering well and if there is no God people are on their own and cannot be blamed if they don't grow. Without God there is no guarantee that they will be able to grow and so the growing does not permit the atheist to persecute them.

By advocating a God who paradoxically can be controlled though he cannot! God will do what is right and does not need us to ask him to. Yet the notion of praying to get something from God is foundational to religion. Believers think prayer has power to get God to do what one wants. They are trying to tell God he won't do something good unless they manipulate

him by asking him. This results in a good feeling about the future. This feeling can lead to violent believers thinking they can make God approve of their activities. Believers do not want a God who does what he does regardless of what we ask for or don't ask for. Their devotion to God masks idolatry. Believers are expected to feel their prayer has been answered even if it has not been answered yet.

By advocating an all-pervading religious attitude - religion is bad because of the religious attitude. Religion is meant to be something not that you do for a few hours a week but is about your whole life 24/7. Religion is essentially a collection of people united by their religious attitude and that attitude is to direct all they do so all they do is religious not just the stuff that is obviously religious. For example, for a Calvinist Christian, being industrious down at the power plant is as much religion as is singing a hymn on Sunday in Church. A religious attitude is the treatment of any leader or book or whatever as infallible or to be obeyed without murmur in the major issues - it is superstition though it may not look like it. It is a mistake then to argue that if religious people are poor and then resort to terrorism to get more rights or to protest that this is about poverty not religion. Hitler should be seen as a religious leader though he may have looked like a secular one. He said he had faith and that is enough to prove that his heart was not secular and his secular actions were not really secular.

By holding that its version of faith is sacred and that those who don't have this faith must respect it. This argument paralyses those who feel, "I don't want to judge religious people who do harm as being bad. I'd rather blame their faith. It is better to blame their faith than them. Blame the thing not the people for we have to assume the best we can about everybody. People are to be respected but belief has no right to be respected. Respect the belief only for the sake of the believer not for its own sake." If faith is to blame, then treating it as something never to be challenged or condemned is enabling the problems it causes.

By urging that people seriously believe in God. If you are left to suffer at the hands of cruel parents, that will damage you and maybe you will then want to punish others and take it out on them. There will be anger in you. The more you suppress it the more dangerous it can become for it is not obvious. If you feel God has let your parents hurt you, and if you really respond to God like you would a human person or loved one, then horrendous damage will be done to you psychologically. It does not matter if somebody tells you that people had a reason to let your parents hurt you or that God had a reason. It is about the sense of abandonment - reasons will not help. A child is still damaged by a parent who was driven to drink. The parent's lack of responsibility for the alcoholism does not change how the child will feel. It is not a rational matter.

By keeping people away from facts and information it does not want them to know - this in itself is a form of totalitarianism. Obscurantism and totalitarianism go together. Could you imagine trying to find a book that refuted the truth-claims of Catholicism in Ireland during the 1950's?

By letting members do evil things and exercise hateful propaganda. An excellent example hails from Hitler's speech, April 12, 1922. Hitler referred to Jesus as his Lord and Saviour and spoke of how Jesus seized the scourge to put the Jews out of the Temple and became an example of how to deal with Jewish poison. The Church never debunked this speech or warned Hitler. It did not even condemn his evil book, Mein Kampf. Harmless books ended up on the Index of Forbidden Books but this one did not. The Church did nothing as he rose to power. Hitler was never excommunicated. People may tell themselves that Hitler was misusing Christ. We have no reason to think Hitler was only using Jesus for political ends - what if he really believed his own speech? It shows the danger of belief in Christianity. And Hitler did get considerable religious and political support from the Churches.

By saying that atheists or atheism as in belief subtly draws one to be more open to causing or enabling violence. A religion that says atheists subtly do that should be checked out in case it is seeing in atheists what it knows exists in itself. You cannot say that God is important or faith in God without hinting that a negative or disbelieving view of them is somehow harmful perhaps subtly so.

By existing - yes religion makes war possible and/or likely merely by existing. Religion becomes more attractive in times and places marked by great violence. People are not turning to it as a natural alternative to violence. They are not turning to it as a natural defence against violence. They are turning to it for they think they will get God to give them more power to vanquish the enemy. They turn to religion then to get supernatural support for their violence.

Religion when it tells you that you need light from God is intrinsically open to the notion that a god or spirit might need you to kill for a superior purpose. But some religions manifest this trait more obviously than others. Atheism is safer when it denies that you should act on anything that seems to be a divine revelation. With religious wars, there are two sides to every story. It is natural for one faith to fear others for the believer is the best judge of the potential dangers of faith and uncertain "certainties".

When a faith or religion has too much violence done in its name, then you have to walk. Take it on face value that the religion is doing something that causes that evil. You don't have to know what it is. Go to a better religion if there is one! There are certain things you do not try to find excuses or reasons for. Go by the principle that actions say it louder. What do

they say about the religion? Do not collude by being a member. Find the door.

Religious as in supernatural faith is definitely the problem. Religion is the problem because it supports and nurtures such faith. A serious opposition to violence means opposition to anything that MAY lead to it especially when the thing is not that important in itself.