

Religious Warmongering

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War is never controllable and is at best a grave but necessary evil. When secularists wage war they can tell the fighters to be just and fair and to avoid any unnecessary hurting and the religionist will say that too. But the danger is the religionist is counting on more than our common humanity to do the right thing – he is counting on the power of God but what if the religion is false or this God or his help is not real? That is a very big thing to get wrong. Religion puts people at risk and that alone makes it a crafty underhand warmonger.

Religion condemns the sin of pride as the root of all evil. Yet valour/military heroism are forms of pride that prove very destructive and it tells the soldier to be like that even if he is not going to war and to have this "virtues" in his heart in case he is called upon to use them in battle.

Those who consider how much blood has been spilt in the name of God and Christ and the Bible may say that God loves and respects the right to life more than he does religion. That is a symptom of denial when it comes from people who think that God nonetheless lets wars and murders and deaths happen. It is not going to help in peaceful endeavours for it is silly. And Christianity likes to say that the Church is the ideal community despite its imperfections for God founded the Church to unite people and teach them. So it follows that if the Church is so great that it comes before the right to life for there would be no right to life recognised or recognisable without it. Indeed if you are only going to respect life because of God or primarily because of God you are a fanatic already! That is really respecting God not life! There is a thin line between that and then taking up arms to maim and murder for God.

Joshua in the Bible was commissioned by God to invade the nation of the Canaanites and destroy their religion and them. The Church says that today such genocide would be wrong and back then it just had to be done because of the times Joshua lived in. In other words, the Church is not against holy war in principle.

Christians believe in the just war theory. They say that God is a God of peace but is sometimes he is forced to require us to go to war against an unjust attacker and for the greater good. They only go to war if they think they have God's blessing and live under the delusion that if they are right they will win the war. As the matters of the spirit are more important in Christianity than the needs of the body, it follows that war is justified for religious reasons in principle. Their wars are holy wars despite the secular veneer.

If a Communist nation threatened to attack your Christian nation unless you refused to indoctrinate children, the Church would say that we must not do it. It would prefer war. Reason says it is better to betray religion and make the children communists. Even if no wars happen like that, religion is intrinsically pro-holy-war. The door is opened to religiously inspired death and destruction even if the door is never used. Religion needs to close the door and lock it if it wants to influence its members to be sincere disciples of peace.

Not a single line of the Bible advises democracy in religion or the state. Though God liked to rattle off silly lists of names in it, he never said anything about democracy. The Bible God always presumes a top-down approach. He even endorses kings. Though democracy can condone violence and war, it is still the best of a bad lot. Rule by kings and despotic religionists and prophet-kings is far too dangerous for they have too much control over what data filters out. Thus they can easily wage war based on trumped-up stories. A book that does not at least advise democracy cannot be described as a contribution to world peace but as a contribution to despotism and bloodshed.

Nobody wants war - even the belligerent don't want it but think its needed. There is enough to wage war about without religion making its input. In terms of commonsense, war is so scary and mad that deep down you would only wage it if you thought God wants it and sanctions it and will bring good from it. You think the odds of winning with divine help are sufficient. War and faith are inseparable. You would not fight in war unless you thought - even if you claimed to be atheist - that somehow you will be safe even if you die and that a Heaven awaits then if not for you then for your people. Religion makes its adherents more accepting of war in the sense that they embrace something that claims that it is sufficient to start a war over. Religion claims to matter more than education or food or the health service or anything else. Christ said man does not live by bread alone but by the word of God. Suppose a religion say Catholicism in some not so obvious way programs people to make them likely to persecute people of other faiths. If Catholics wage war over religion, those Catholics who

disapprove will not start opposing Catholicism as such and so they become part of the problem. Religion says that your faith is shown by your works. James in the Bible says that faith without works is dead and useless and that faith works and its presence is detected by good works. If an allegedly atheist regime wages war and acts like it has strong faith that it will triumph and the bloodshed will be worth it then it is showing its faith in something supernatural - God? - by its works. There is a difference between atheist in your deeds and in your theory. Many atheists are probably latent believers in God. If they feel something will protect them and lead them to triumph in war then they are an example of the dangers of belief in God. They are not an example of real atheists.

Religion breeds violent intolerance and extremism in some people. Some may already be prone to such bigotry - but if they are, religion is still a bad influence on them. As religion is often strange and most members don't understand it too well, it is easy to come away from reading Church history and the Bible and from thinking about how God seems to use and want evil to exist for a good purpose with the notion that violence on behalf of God and religion are not to be condemned if not to be endorsed. And it could be that the mainstream religion is covering up the violence endorsed by its scriptures and that the terrorists are interpreting the religion correctly. And if you see that violence is permitted and, worse, endorsed by God in your Bible you will reason that if you kill for religion are in the wrong it is not a huge deal because God endorses violence anyway. It trivialises your cruelty.

Sam Harris said that there are good reasons to treat people right but that religion gives you inferior and bad reasons to do this. For example, Jesus said you must give total love to God and limit the love you have for your neighbour. Love of neighbour is a secondary commandment to the one to love God meaning that if you have no choice you must love God and forget the neighbour. Christian good works reflect an invented good not real good. The motive is defective. Anything that gives you faulty reasons to do good must take responsibility for those in its ranks who do terrible things. Bad people are devolved over time. Evil needs to be drip-fed to draw others in.

And to say as Christendom does that God matters and people only matter because he made them and wants them to matter IS extremism. You are supposed to want God more than food - you would kill for food and nobody would blame you if you had no choice - the message is clear: killing for God is not wrong in principle.