

SHOULD CHILDREN BE EXPOSED TO CHRISTIANITY?

The human persons brain develops fastest during the first three years of life. Everything gets set then and it is hard to change. So any damage done to a child's development during this time will result in long term and short term mental health problems. That is why we need to take a firm stand against religious indoctrination as being harmful in principle. It treats the child as something to be hypnotised almost. And then there is the matter of the religious doctrines having harmful content.

Whether you think it is hypnosis or not, parents seem to have that kind of effect on their children. Children are prone to believing what their parents say. Parents wittingly or unwittingly will form their child's mind irreversibly in some way forever. Religion knows this which is why it is so centred on the family. Even parents sending their child to a religious school sends a message: "The school will tell you what you are to think about religion for us. It has our stamp of approval." Religion says that even your secular dealings are to be offered to God so they are sacred and holy though not obviously so. That is how it makes sure parents can unwittingly absorb the faith or a strong attachment to the religious structure. It explains why atheists of a religious background often will not be true to atheist principles and have their child given to a religion for cultural reasons and for the ceremonies. Child conditioning will lead to the child internalising the religious structure and then the faith. Faith always comes second to the structure. That is why Catholics who would not learn the faith or develop their faith will still run looking for baptism and confirmation and first communion ceremonies.

How dogmatic and fundamentalist Christians groom children and harm them:

"They are highly submissive to established authority, aggressive in the name of that authority, and conventional to the point of insisting everyone should behave as their authorities decide. They are fearful and self-righteous and have a lot of hostility in them that they readily direct toward various out-groups. They are easily incited, easily led, rather un-inclined to think for themselves, largely impervious to facts and reason, and rely instead on social support to maintain their beliefs. They bring strong loyalty to their in-groups, have thick-walled, highly compartmentalized minds, use a lot of double standards in their judgments, are surprisingly unprincipled at times, and are often hypocrites. But they are also Teflon-coated when it comes to guilt. They are blind to themselves, ethnocentric and prejudiced, and as closed-minded as they are narrow-minded. They can be woefully uninformed about things they oppose, but they prefer ignorance and want to make others become as ignorant as they. They are also surprisingly uninformed about the things they say they believe in, and deep, deep, deep down inside many of them have secret doubts about their core belief. But they are very happy, highly giving, and quite zealous"

"Over time, this authoritarian conditioning breeds a sense of personal inadequacy and endangerment. The traumatized self becomes angry, hostile, and resentful. However, because the religion that produces, legitimizes, and represses the trauma is beyond question, the traumatized individual remains blind to its causes. This leads to authoritarian aggression, that personality trait Dr. Altemeyer describes as a "little volcano of hostility bubbling away inside of them looking for a (safe, approved) way to erupt."

- See more at: <http://www.goodnewsclubs.info>

Many believe that a child being raised in a religious tradition encourages the child to learn from religion and hopefully commit to the religion. It is thought to be better than having the child see religion as a private matter which leads to people dropping out of the social side of religion and creating collections of individuals and not communities. The risk of indoctrination is thought to be worth it.

Many children are raised in terribly dysfunctional family setups whereby they are neglected and abused. A surprisingly high number grow up to be normal upstanding people. Some however do not. A religion often carries on like it is the child's real family and overrides the child's family. Many religions hurt children with their superstitions and their moral and tribal taboos. That a child can suffer terribly and still come through it well does not justify any of the harm done by dysfunctional families. And religion is the quintessential dysfunctional family and its speciality is lies. If the child grows up to become the adult from Hell, the blame may lie entirely with the religion.

This work explicates the mental, "spiritual" and emotional damage that the Christian faith can do to a child. Children who are spared this have been exposed to a Christianity that has not been implemented properly and which has been presented in a very sweetened up way. Self-esteem problems stem from childhood. Christianity is to blame for the biggest problems because it tells children it is their biggest thing. Even liberal versions of the faith teach things such as that God in the form of Jesus wants us to believe in what he has revealed in the Church and live it and that God by definition is the being who must be loved most of all. Any religion that seeks to be the dominant influence and value in the life of a child risks inflicting, directly or indirectly, psychological harm on them. Some therapists and parents believe that if a child does

wrong, he or she should suffer low self-esteem as a consequence. Even that is okay, what is not okay is religion trying to give them something extra to dislike and hate themselves for. Consider how the child who tells a lie may suffer low self-esteem for it - that child will suffer more if she sees the lie as not only bad in itself but also as an affront to God!

THE DEMAND

I demand in the interest of the rights of the child that the deliberate exposure of children to Christian propaganda for recruitment purposes be made illegal.

Our children are the future of our world. It is important that if anything that exists that may or does damage them psychologically can be prohibited by the force of law that it be done. The rights of children come before their parents and priests and teachers in many respects for they are so young and are at their developmental stage mentally and emotionally. Parents have no right to determine the religious beliefs of the child for religion is a private matter.

We do not want our children exposed to excessive violence or pornography on television but we do nothing about the far more insidious and deadly spiritual pornography that is dished out by the Churches.

Remember faith and reason cannot be equal. Reason implies willingness to revise your views and correct them. So if it is wrong to denigrate faith it is even more wrong to denigrate reason. To indoctrinate children into a faith is denigrating reason.

Instilling humanistic or non-religious values in children is bad. But instilling religious values is worse. Both are forms of indoctrination and this is wrong for these things should be their decision and nobody else's. It is okay to help children find the values themselves.

A little religious knowledge or spiritual knowledge is worse than none at all. If people knew these things better they would not be taken in by religious and spiritual charlatans such as the Medjugorje visionaries and the local tarot reader. Children are usually fed enough religion or spirituality to try and get them hooked and they become easy fodder for their religion and maybe even another religion.

We take it for granted that a person should stand by his beliefs unless something turns up that shows them to be incorrect or wrong. Religion is taking advantage of that principle. If it is true that we are born programmed for religion, surely it is all the more reason for us NOT to be indoctrinated. There is a danger like most people that we will be drawn to feel that if we are going to err then we would rather err with the majority. That impulse helps explain how religion conditions people.

Children have alarmingly strong self-justifying tendencies. A child will bully a child and claim that she deserved it. Religion and the concept of deserving go together. There would be no need for religion unless it was thought people deserve bad things or good things. It is even based on the notion that God deserves service and love from us. Religion only makes the child a bigger self-justifier than he is and that leads to a boost in aggression and to sectarian devotion. A vicious circle appears. The more the child harms others the more self-justification is necessary. And if he cannot justify himself before parents and others he will turn to God for justification and feel he has got it. And the more self-justification then the more aggression appears. And when enough children go that way and grow up like that the more religious persecution they will foment.

When adults look back to their faith in Christ, will this bring back memories of hope, imagination and joy? Did Jesus give you magical moments in which you experience a perfect world just for a fleeting moment? This experience is considered so special for a child that it is reasoned that it Santa makes childhood special so parents lying that Santa exists is acceptable.

The recruitment of children to the following must be ceased immediately by legal force:

To faiths that insist we must look after others because it pleases God - all our love must manifest our complete love of God. A child who struggles with self-esteem and depression and abuse does not need to hear her parents encouraged to see her just as a tool with which to please God.

To forms of faith that see messages from angels and Heaven and God in virtually everything. One risk is that a child might jump off a cliff thinking he will be saved by an angel. Or a child might think she is getting warnings about a person. That can lead to an innocent person being hounded.

To forms of faith that require you to approve of evil and murder - even if they are peaceful now. An example is children being told that the Bible is infallible despite its Jesus having demanded vengeance by the stoning to death of adulterers. If you do not engage in acts of violence you still revere them.

Serious superstition is a great evil. You don't want to create a world where you hold that if somebody walks under a ladder and then dies horribly shortly after that they brought it on themselves by asking for bad luck.

NEVER ALONE

A young child thinks in very literal ways. A child can be freaked out by the thought that God sees her or him going to the toilet. We all need to be alone. Sometimes we want to feel totally responsible for what decision we are going to make. We want to be literally on our own. A child might want to be totally alone and unwatched and telling him or her that there is a God who is everywhere and who sees all and who keeps all things in existence is robbing the child of that.

God judges a nice person as fit for everlasting torment on the basis of one or two "sinful" acts. For example, you go to Hell no matter how much charity work you are doing if you have sex with somebody else's spouse. To tell a child to befriend a God like that is child abuse pure and simple.

HARMFUL IDEA THAT WE MUST LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL

The doctrine that God comes first which was taught by Jesus (and which is still taught by the Church) urges you to do what you find harmful as long as God commands it for God knows best.

If I avoid my father who wants to convert me to paganism so that my faith in God is safe from him then I am doing this for my faith and am trusting in God. But what if there is no God? Is it right to hurt and disown my father over a collection of beliefs? Of course not. Children are hurt and damaged merely by being taught that God exists. The doctrine that God comes first means that you have to enshrine God's laws in the law of the land so it is undoubtedly true that religion is a threat to freedom.

Even a child finds out easily that there are as many views of God as there are people. The Church wants the child to accept its view and its interpretation of what God wants which really means that the child is being encouraged to let the Church think for her. This can cause a grave defect in self-confidence and indeed is meant to so that the child becomes a mind-slave of the Church. Whether you like the beliefs or not you have to accept them and beliefs are valued above people.

When you say with Christianity and Islam that God comes first what you mean is belief in God comes first and matters more than human beings. You are saying that what the leaders say about God matters and is the truth. It is really man's ideas about God that are being put first - God is another matter. You are saying that we must bring in rules from another world that sees a purpose in them that we can never understand on earth when we are deciding about right and wrong. A nasty universe means God's plan simply has to be nasty too in many respects. This can be used as an excuse for bringing in bad rules. Rules like this are the reason we have seen women dying because those who they depended on did not give them an abortion to save their lives because God had forbidden it.

In religious faith, you are to believe that goodness is not just an abstract but is God. That means that God must come first. That means that if you have a doubt or even disbelieve you are committing a grave wrong and doing harm. As a child I had doubts and I was persecuted by the very concept of God a concept that incites to prejudice and discrimination against atheist and agnostic people and often doubters as well.

HIDDEN DOCTRINES

There are lots of little evil things in Church teachings they prefer to say nothing about. For example they approve of God making the Virgin Mary pregnant when she was almost a child herself and childbirth was horrendous for girls her age due not only to age factors but also to the malnourished state of poor women in general. They approve of and recognise the Virgin's marriage in childhood to Joseph so they condone paedophilia. Marriage is for sexual rights and Joseph by marrying Mary even if he never slept with her was still declaring that it was his right to do so. The Church however praises them for allegedly not having sex which means basically that their wedding was a lie.

The people are never properly informed about problems about the philosophical, ethical, scriptural and historical accuracy of the religion. The clergy lies. They censor books to ensure the faithful only read what they want them to read.

DOCTRINES HARMFUL TO CHILDREN

If a doctrine is harmful, it is empowered by being made non-testable or if it is rigged so that if the victim sees through it she will not have the confidence to trust her judgement. A non-testable doctrine is harmful in itself for it disrespects your right to look at the evidence and be confident in the truth.

An example is how you are told that certain prayers always make you a better person. If they don't work you are accused of

failing to see that they have. You are told that God has a plan and is working for good and if you can't see it then God works in ways we cannot understand. Or you are accused of not really being sincere.

There is no concern for young people who may find out that their religion is man-made and not from God or that their saviour did not save anybody and how they may end up feeling like they have been hugely betrayed and unable to trust anybody ever again. They feel betrayed at how they were given a best friend such as God or Jesus or a saint who turned out to be anything but friends.

The fundamental Christian doctrines that Jesus died to pay for our sins to let us off with our sins and rose from the dead to verify this doctrine accuses the child of killing Jesus by being a sinner and the Hell doctrine is terrifying for obvious reasons.

The Eucharist or Mass depends on the notion that Jesus died for sins so it is bad for children.

A child sees things in a very concrete way and it is not right to make a child feel she has engaged in cannibalism by eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood.

People should do good because they want to and not to avoid the everlasting tormenting punishment of Hell so Hell is a corrupting doctrine. A child will do good to avoid Hell which will cause the child to see morality as something scary and freedom and something bad and that he or she has no right to. Hell implies you have the right to accuse yourself of being bad enough to stay in a place of torment forever. You do not have the right to demean yourself like that and it will impact on other people too for you are not an island. Innocent until proven guilty. And you hypothetically judge others - "If you commit certain sins and die you will suffer Hell forever and it is all your fault." The if does not make it non-judgemental. I

These doctrines scare children and are cruel for that reason. They are child abuse.

A child does not know the way the world and universe works. Thus the child is prone to thinking she sees people and entities that are in fact not there. The child lives in a world of miracle and magic. Suppose a child reads the Bible which speaks of people going into furnaces and not getting burned. What if the child risks putting her hand in the fire? It is natural for a child to feel magic is true, but that does not mean you must encourage that feeling. Religion does and takes no responsibility for the potential damage.

ASKED TO ACCEPT YOUR DEATH

In religious faith, you are taught to accept your death as your due at the hands of God and to trust him. No being however great has the right to ask you to trust him that far. The message this gives is that when you can encourage your own death by accepting it from God then murdering a person because your faith tells you to cannot be wrong either.

FINALLY

The potential harm and the actual harm to children done through religious education is real though it can be hard to pin down. All of us have been damaged which is why religious damage gets lost in the confusion.