

RELIGIOUS INITIATION AND INDOCTRINATION OF CHILDREN

Can baptism make a child a real member of the Christian Church?

No. If it could then a child that was baptised and circumcised at the same time would be both a Christian and a Jew - mutually contradictory religions!

Should a Humanist allow his or her child to be baptised?

Only in cases of absolute necessity such as to avoid persecution. The children of Humanists must be raised as no religion until they are free to decide. Advise your parents and friends as to why you can't let the children be baptised.

If a Christian partner wants their baby baptised and the atheist or non-religious partner does not then whose wish should come first?

The non-religious one. A baby has no right to baptism for there is no need for it. Therefore parents do not have the right or need to have the child baptised. It is the believer who is the strange and superstitious one.

What is the purpose of infant circumcision and infant baptism?

It's religion taking advantage of the child's vulnerability for the child would belong to another religion and follow that if he or she were initiated into it instead. These rites are given by the clergy to acquire the right to indoctrinate the children – a right they can never have.

Does entering your baby in a religion oppose the rights of Humanists?

Yes. A baby follows its own instincts and so it is naturally born a humanist! Initiation implies that the baby is being dedicated to being taken away from its true self. The baby initiation is promoting the alleged rights of religion which means the rights of Humanists are being opposed.

Should religion have schools with which to indoctrinate children?

It is against the right of children to liberty and healthy self-development and religion teaches guesses not facts. School is for teaching facts. They should be taught about religion in such a way that they can make up their own minds and certainly about right and wrong

What are the Humanist aims towards education?

Humanism will campaign for secular schools and will set up schools of its own. The law must see to it that sound basic logic which will cover the truths of right and wrong is taught in schools for such is the source of order.

Are we very prone to being conditioned?

Yes especially when we are children. A child's mind is designed to accept whatever an authority figure such as their parents tells them.

Is the teaching of religion or any religious or superstitious beliefs to children a form of child abuse?

Yes. To tell children to worship beings that do not exist or to fear offending them or to fear their punishments is abuse. Religion despite being a superstition has some forms that admit that teaching superstition to children is wrong. For example, Christianity condemns superstition.

Is abuse too strong of a word?

No.

What does telling your child that the supernatural and miracles happen do to the child?

It puts the child at dangerous risk of believing in magic - eg, a child could believe that God will protect him if he jumps off a cliff.

How do you answer the claim that religion and religious parents and teachers of religion only encourage and help the children to believe of their own volition?

This would not be indoctrination but influence. The religious ban on wilful doubt shows that indoctrination is called for. Indoctrination, even atheist, is child abuse. Religion commands that parents indoctrinate their children in its faith and it happens a lot.

Should atheists influence children to accept atheism or should they indoctrinate?

No - they should influence. Indoctrination is always abuse. It leaves the person thinking they believe when they have really

been forced to deceive themselves that they believe.

How can you tell the difference?

Influence means you only tell them why you believe and what the alternatives are. Indoctrination means you tell them why you believe and you keep them away from alternatives. Strong forms of indoctrination will tell children that they will go to Hell forever or have a bad reincarnation or die if they don't believe. A more subtle and therefore more dangerous form is telling them that God is so good and has done so much for them that to offend him is terrible. When the abuse reaches that level, the state should get involved. The children should be encouraged to keep a diary. The prosecution of parents and/or teachers may be needed.

What do genuine believers in religious freedom do?

They influence children. Indoctrination is against religious freedom and is unnecessary and therefore child abuse.

What if religious people are friendly and good but logic shows their religious faith has sinister implications?

Their faith must be regarded as a cult. By supporting that religion, they are responsible for the evil that some believers believe their religion commands them to do.

Who are you to tell parents they are abusing their children by indoctrinating them or teaching them religion?

We should never tell anybody. Give them the information to decide themselves. We cannot know exactly what is happening in every household.

How do you respond to one who says that if you don't force religion on your children you are really forcing the religion of atheism or secularism on them?

There is no forcing going on. They are encouraged to think for themselves. If it leads them to religion let it. If it leads them to atheism let it.

Conclusion

Do not force religious initiation or doctrine on your child. Urge and help the child to learn about religion as you stress he/she must make up his or her own mind.