

## SHOULD WE DESCRIBE RELIGION AS A THOUGHT DISORDER OR MENTAL DISORDER?

Many say that the bad consequences of labelling religion as a mental illness include that it stops you looking into why sensible people get involved with something as irrational as religion. But sensible people make mistakes.

The answer to the religion problem is that we all need to help each other become more rational. There is more to treating mental illness than just listening to professionals.

Another consequence is that it could be thought that simply being irrational means you are ill. But it could mean you are lazy or mistaken or misinformed or just haven't got the chance to think.

If religion is a mental illness, it can make other mental illnesses you have worse. It spreads the maladaptation that leads to further illness.

The world fears the next logical steps.

If religion is a sickness then the religious need professional help and need to go to therapists who can help them weed out the religious conditioning and sickness they suffer.

Children will have to be taken out of religious schools.

Children will have to be removed from religious parents.

Religious evangelisation will have to be prohibited for it spreads the mental illness.

The answer to all that is that the steps will only apply in serious cases. You cannot take every child away from religious parents. Some yes but the rest will need to be challenged on what they are doing to the child.

Fr. Peter Carota says on his blog that "All people who sin are mentally ill". Religion often thinks atheists and sinners are sick so why can't we atheists not think the religious leaders in particular are sick?

While the mentally ill are as harmless as anybody else, it is a fact that if the person is religious then their illness can go in a dangerous direction. 95% percent of crimes in the United States are committed by people who do not have any sign of a mental illness. Most of them do have religion though. It stands to reason that if a person believes a God has the right to kill and delegate that right to us and that belief is a mental disorder that they will prove dangerous.

## SO IS RELIGION A THOUGHT DISORDER?

Religion according to some is not a mental illness but is a thought disorder that may require professional help. It can attract the mentally ill. It may lead to mental illness or exacerbate it. One thing is for sure, it may be necessary to treat the person as having a thought disorder before assessing it as a mental illness. Carefully thought out reappraisals of religious truth claims would be essential.

## CONTRADICTION

Contradictory beliefs that the person seems too attached to are signs of disordered thinking and processing. Contradictory beliefs are really not beliefs at all. They are just fighting each other. They are proof that one only imagines one believes. No matter what the Catholic or Mormon or Muslim or whatever says, the morals they get from being part of society is what matter to them even at the expense of specifically religious morals. Yet they will say they love God totally when in fact they would rather God went and died if it meant their little newborn baby could live. If religion is not a mental disorder then it wants to be. The more self-contradictory a "believer" is the more they are just calling themselves a believer.

## OTHER THOUGHTS

To say religion is a mental illness supposedly insults mentally ill people but that is not true if religion really is a mental illness. It is religion that is insulting those people by stealing a place in society as if it were good and healthy. Also, mental illness is an umbrella term. If religion is one kind of mental illness that is not insulting people with more obvious kinds such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia for it is in a category of its own.

Are we defining religion and mentally ill people by mental illness. We are defining religion as mental illness as in how mental illness is a thing. We are not defining mentally ill people by their illness.

There are those who say we are not focusing on what draws people to religion if we dismiss it as mental illness. But with mental illness we still have to try to understand the person and what motivates them. It does not follow that if a person has a mental illness that we can just ignore them and dehumanise them.

If religion is not evil or a mental illness it could still be a stepping stone to them just as sugar is a stepping stone to diabetes

One study found that if you believe in a God who is there but who does not meddle in your life that “Belief in a deistic God and one’s overall belief in God were not significantly related to any psychiatric symptoms.” That is not a very good endorsement of religion as being good for your mind for it has a more interventionist God. Feelings and impulses are taken as his promptings.

Atheists can be irrational and that does not make them mentally ill. So what about religion? We are saying the irrationality of religion is a symptom of a delusion. The atheist is not having a relationship with a make believe friend. This relationship amounts to little more than pretending that your ideas and impulses are his way of talking to you. What would you think of a person who said that the tree communicates with him through how its leaves fall as if it were a code or sign.

### WHAT RELIGION SAYS ABOUT FALSE RELIGION

People say that if characters like Muhammad, Moses or Joseph Smith were not really getting revelations from God though they said they were then they are liars or insane or both. Even religious people say that too. C.S. Lewis said insanity in Jesus was possible but he denied it was likely so it all comes down to faith and probability. But they admit the improbable can be in fact be the truth. Lewis would agree that a liar can be insane as well or one thing one hour and the other the next. But why couldn't an insane man or a man with a mental problem not be God? He will not even go there! That Christians think a man with leprosy or a limp or with a hearing problem can be God - the Bible alludes to Jesus having what sounds like a limp - but not a mental illness is interesting. Why not? They obviously then on some level suspect Jesus was mentally disturbed and that is where t

