

11. Religion Fails

In America 76% profess to be Christian, while in Japan, 0.7% profess to be Christian.¹ Yet Americans have a higher murder rate, higher rape rate, higher robbery rate, higher drug addiction rate, higher sexually transmitted disease rate, higher homeless rate, higher welfare rate, and higher divorce rate. However, not everything is higher: Americans have a lower life expectancy and overall lower intelligence.

Though the Japanese are religious, American Christians see theirs as the only correct viewpoint and send missionaries to enlighten other countries. Considering the state of America, this is outrageous. So, are various religions so bad they should be eliminated completely, or would radical changes be sufficient? I address these issues, and provide observations, explanations, and solutions.

Institutionalized Cruelty

In Hinduism's caste system, god supposedly created Untouchables to be used and treated like garbage. Now for Hindus, the Vedas are roughly equivalent to the Judeo-Christian bible. The Rig Veda's Purusha sukta contains a creation account: from "God" four social classes supposedly arose. (2) From his mouth came the highest class, from his arms another class, from his thighs another, and from his feet the lowest servile class. From this lowest class, some worked the dirtiest jobs, spawning a fifth class: untouchables or dalits.⁽³⁾ **Although only one Vedic passage mentions the caste system, many deny this passage's authenticity, and untouchables aren't even mentioned, people pick what they want from religious texts, twist them, and ignore the rest.** Therefore, defective scriptures are medieval maces. Certainly they're mostly pleasant and harmless; that's the wielder's handle; victims are bashed with their ends.

Many deny that India still has "untouchables," a monstrous lie. Others claim that untouchables are gladly fulfilling their karma to achieve a better afterlife, another monstrous lie. India lacks plumbing and adequate sewage systems. People urinate and defecate in "dry toilets" (cement enclosures). Others publicly relieve themselves in spots that drain into crude sewers. Hinduism's caste system regulates dalits (formerly "untouchables") to either clean these messes or starve to death.

Emptying "dry toilets" is called manual scavenging.⁽⁴⁾ Proper equipment is unavailable, so workers use brooms and scrapers to gather waste into baskets, and must carry these oozing baskets many kilometers to dumping grounds. Pay is terrible; workers make just enough to survive. They cannot afford gloves or other protective gear, let alone transportation. Therefore workers perpetually stink of human waste. Washing cannot kill the powerful stench, since it's renewed every day. Many have infected boils from the contagion; others are blinded by it.⁵

Sewage workers also lack basic protective gear. They sometimes stand waste high in raw sewage which clings to their body, while clearing jams with wooden sticks. Workers also encounter dead rotting animals. Broken bottles lurk in the blackened mire, tearing worker's flesh. Other sewage workers are lowered by rope into narrow holes to clear blockages. Oftentimes, workers are crippled by accidents, or die from suffocation or exposure to poison gas. Safety measures are advocated but not implemented; first aid is nonexistent.⁶

Eighty percent of manual scavengers and sewer workers die prematurely from work-related health problems. There is no health insurance, social security, or enough money to save up anything. These jobs being officially illegal does little; a million people still endure these worst jobs. Many are outright slaves. Even Indian farmers have it badly; many cannot survive, despite their valuable work. The "god-ordained" caste system also forces worker's children, grandchildren, and every subsequent generation into those same lives.

If pious people ignore this problem, their religion is excrement. If non-religious people ignore this problem, their humanism is excrement. **To qualify as human, we must address iniquity.** Instead, we are selfish crybabies who complain if somebody doesn't flush our toilet after urinating just

once. Even some successful Indian “Christians” flee India for America instead of staying to help their own people.

After prayerful consideration, massive quantities of rubber gloves, gas masks, and other protective gear could be shipped. Workers could be sent to demolish “dry toilets,” and create adequate plumbing and sewage systems, teaching their people to maintain these systems. Or a deal could be made with these corrupt governments: treat your citizens properly, or we will stop all financial aid and trade. If these methods don’t work, the only other option to cause radical lasting change would be to attack the oppressors and threaten them with annihilation unless they eradicate their terrible cruelty. Under coercion, radical changes could occur, since the oppressive caste system is only a fraction of Hinduism; this can be eliminated.

What Else Must Change

Nastiness and self-righteousness: Some groups mistreat those who don’t share their beliefs. Many pontificate hatefully, spitefully, or pride-fully. Others have the doctrine of eternal torture, and that those who have no opportunity to hear their spiel are damned.

Misplaced funds: Billions of dollars are used to create expensive churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques instead of funding good causes. Other well-meaning people give money to poor countries. However, those in power take the money themselves, while the poor multiply, creating even more destitute and starving people.

Disrespecting animals and nature: Many people who support the Golden Rule, treating others how they would like to be treated, only apply it to Homo sapiens. See Animal Rights/Environmental Groups in 21.Money.

Defending cruel, unjust, contradictory, or nonsensical religious texts: No book is proven to be a perfect document authored by a supreme god. Pushing that idea causes rejection by nonbelievers and often causes harm. See 18.Telephoning God? Part 2.

Not being proactive: Inaction because God is supposedly taking care of people, or not working to prevent bad conditions, then trying to pick up the pieces later. Part of what prevents being successfully proactive is ignorance of science, logic, and human nature.

Antisocial constructs: Religious people are much more divided than non-religious people. Besides, the sense of community between religious people is usually superficial, chiefly caused by society’s transience.

Unnecessary war/violence: Although the connection between religion and violence is exaggerated, and the non-religious have been just as violent, we expect more from pious people, considering their claims.

Competing personal testimonies: Although personal testimonies are commendable, people from every religion, sect, and cult give powerful testimonies of how their lives have been bettered from their beliefs. Myriads of people testify how they or someone else was healed by the power of prayer, meditation, or their spiritual leader. Atheists can also give personal testimonies as to how their lives improved through discovering a better system of thought and living. So **personal testimony must be validated by a logical explanation as to why our philosophy is advantageous over someone else’s.**

God's Providence?

Here are general categories of ways most people claim to experience God's providence:

A) Argument from devastation: If fifty to eighty percent of a certain group suffer a natural disaster or disease, "God punished them" (while arbitrarily skipping the rest). Yet we've known for centuries that climatic and biological irregularities cause these conditions.

B) Argument from *incomplete* devastation: If a hundred people die in a fiery plane crash while one child survives, "God miraculously saved that child" (simpering naivety). Besides, the arguments from devastation and incomplete devastation contradict one another.

C) Playing it both ways: "If things go my way, God blessed me or my guardian angel was working. But if they don't, then God moves in mysterious ways. If things don't go YOUR way, you're ungodly or lack faith. But if my religious leader fails or lacks faith, the Devil was targeting men of God." Also, people support their positions with "It's right here in Scripture" (Old Testament). But when confronted with other Old Testament passages which they ignore and violate, they dismiss them with "We're not under the old law."

D) God's workings: If I am healthy, have a loving spouse, good job, et cetera, "that's because God blessed me." This insults others who lack these things which "God" doesn't bless them with. Rather, it's evident that good or bad fortune usually happen by blind chance. Actually, whenever anyone declares that God did anything in their life, when this can be explained by natural means, it is a form of presumption.

E) Spiritual intuition: During brief encounters with a holy person and a psychopath, you couldn't tell which one is which if they both bit you on the nose. Saying you can easily tell is judgmentalism. See 25. Communication Fails.

F) Specific Cases: "I was cornered by a vicious bulldog about to attack. I yelled out "God, help me!" The dog immediately stopped, closed its mouth, and ran off." How about the dog was trained to respond to a commanding voice, or was scared off by someone who was five times bigger than it and shouting. Now meet a hungry lion or dangerous snake in the wild which can't hear shouting since snakes are deaf; see what happens.

"I was caught in a hail of bullets; none of them hit me. Therefore, God protected me." But handguns are notoriously inaccurate at any distance, unless fired by someone trained in marksmanship. And what about everyone who is shot; God overlooked them?

"So and so was in traffic, driving to their planned suicide. A total stranger suddenly yelled 'God loves you!' They were dissuaded from suicide; God sent a miracle." How about somebody read their mood from their body language and facial expression? And what about the forty thousand people who commit suicide every year who aren't dissuaded? God doesn't love them?

"I prayed for rain; it rained immediately. "I prayed that it wouldn't rain as predicted; God listened." How about your body can act like a barometer which detects moisture or lack of moisture in the air? One day weather changes are far removed from the biblical Elias praying for weather changes that lasted for years.

Conclusively, most claims of having experienced God's providence fall apart under close examination. Yet even losses or tragedies are now considered signs. It's "God removed those things in my life that were keeping me from Him." Yet consider everybody else who keeps those things that hinder them!

G) **A Seemingly Incredible Subject of God's Providence:** A four year old boy was rescued from drowning in icy waters at the last minute by a priest. This boy grew up to be a war hero, winning two medals for actions undertaken when the risk to life was great. Another time an enemy soldier held him at gunpoint, but surprisingly let him go. This war hero became the most successful politician in history. Throughout his political career he survived at least fifteen assassination attempts, some of which he amazingly escaped from within seconds. Thereafter he declared himself chosen by God's Provid-

ence; millions of people agreed. This man was Adolf Hitler.(7,8) Now the experiences of almost everyone claiming God's providence are far less spectacular than Mr. Hitler's claims, yet they also denounce Hitler's claims. This is like someone who can lift 100 kg and claims to be strong, saying that someone who can lift 400 kg is weak. It's completely self-refuting. If you're one of them, stop claiming to be especially blessed. It comes across as arrogant, idiotic, and cannot convince unbelievers.

H) Don't Misunderstand Me: I am not speaking against anyone's faith and applaud belief in God's providence. God may have sent me His providence 1,000 times. Maybe He never did: zero times. I simply argue that humans do not have the mind of God and therefore cannot know God's workings. Since science cannot explain life's origin through merely natural means, I embrace a supernatural cause. Also, systems in our body are comparative to man-made systems which require intelligent design. See chapters 3-4. But claiming to have felt God's presence is another matter, since science succeeds in explaining this phenomenon through purely natural means. Its answer: strong human emotion. Also, there is no standard of comparison as to what God's presence should feel like and Scripture never says what it should feel like. Because of emotionalism, Christian believers are now "divinely inspired" to divorce their spouse and break up their family to join their sweethearts. Islamic terrorists also "feel God's presence" come over them.

Furthermore, the vast majority of "signs" aren't even biblical. Biblical signs are: prophecy fulfilled accurately and consistently; knowing what someone thought without them telling you; clearly hearing supernatural voices or seeing supernatural visions; and miracles (which cannot be explained scientifically). People who believe in so-called signs may subconsciously give themselves accolades to justify lives that are personally substandard or whose lives leave others out. Experiencing insubstantial "signs" smacks of foolish pride; you're supposedly better than others.

Fast Food Religion

Oftentimes the focus is making money off the needy masses who feel empty instead of spreading righteousness. This contributes to the following problems:

A) Promoting crutch religion: The goal shouldn't be to "fill that God-shaped hole in your heart." Righteousness should be the primary goal. Because crutch religion is overemphasized, religious groups are often made up of fearful, disturbed, and troubled people who cannot help others; they need help themselves. If every atheist left America, it would lose only 1% of its prison population.

B) Cafeteria religion: Few realize that their religion has changed dramatically from its original form, which fact itself discredits most modern creeds. Besides, most people willfully deviate from their current religion when it's convenient. Others pick a worldview that suits themselves. Still others fear rejection; they compromise their faith by giving in to politically correct ideas so others will like them.

C) Quantity religion: Spreading religion superficially by simply telling others about Jesus, passing a religious tract, or sending children to church camp helps you feel good about yourself and brings money into the Church, but often produces superficial converts. We must take a personal interest in others, not cut off that personal interest after they accept our spiel, and do it in love.

There is an erroneous idea among religious people that certain things are wrong simply because they displease God, instead of being wrong because they are inherently wrong. Euthyphro's Dilemma exposes this faulty thinking.(9) Instead, we must ask ourselves "If there was no God or I had no religion, would my actions and ideas benefit the world anyway?"

Opposing Physician Assisted Suicide

Many devout people vehemently oppose assisted suicide for those with extreme conditions who have no possibility of recovery. They often confuse assisted suicide: an act of self-determination, with euthana-

sia: ending someone's life without their consent. Some confuse physician assisted suicide with obviously unwarranted suicide. I'm a former crisis hotline volunteer; I oppose suicide even for someone who lost their entire family, entire life savings, all their friends, their home, and their health, such as the biblical Job. But patients who are permanently and fully incapacitated and suffer endless pain, which prevents them from ever enjoying life or contributing to society, which patients also desire death, is another matter. These are those whom lawmakers forcibly stop from ending their lives.

Secondly, the masses misquote the sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill," not understanding that this merely prohibited murder of fellow Israelites. The Hebrew bible frequently advocates killing people: in war, self-defense, and capital punishment. Thirdly, those who force others to accept unwanted misery and wrest away their power of self-determination, while being a pro-war zealot play god by deciding who should live or die.

As for the doctrine of redemptive suffering, advocates of this doctrine contradict themselves by putting decrepit pets to sleep to alleviate their suffering. Since animals are part of the fallen world, and grace is supposedly poured out through the suffering of others besides Christ and His sacrifice, whence the contradiction? Also, opponents of assisted suicide never e-mail, call, or visit me, let alone maintain personal friendships; that's too much painstaking work. But when someone else writhes in pain, they want them to endure it. This reminds me of when Jesus blasted the religious hypocrites, noting that they laid heavy and grievous burdens on others, while they themselves would not touch the burdens with one of their fingers (Matthew 23, Luke 11).

Notably, many believers do help alleviate suffering: doing missionary work, having clothing drives, and volunteering at food banks and homeless shelters. But these works are done where others can see them. Privately consenting to assisted suicide and ending life support would give them no visibility, while protesting the termination of life support and assisted suicide gets them attention.

Again, any hypocrisy is no reflection on what Christ established. Interestingly, the bible mentions suicide six times without condemning it, and seemingly applauds the action in one instance. In II Maccabees 14:39-46, found in Catholic bibles, Rasias, while committing suicide, is hailed as brave, faithful, godly, and manly. Also, a number of early sainted Christians committed suicide to avoid highly repugnant and inescapable conditions, while a number of early church fathers applauded their actions. Not until Augustine in the fifth century was suicide condemned in all circumstances.¹⁰

I do not advocate assisted suicide. I simply have a problem with people who force their opinions on others, yet show no love towards them throughout their lives. I have a problem with those who force strictly religious matters on everyone, especially when they cannot prove their position is correct even from the standpoint of their own religion.

War and Mayhem

The cliché "There are no atheists in foxholes" (war trenches) supposedly proves that everyone subconsciously believes in God. Fear of imminent death allegedly brings that out. Yet it's doubtful that extreme distress brings out one's true character. It certainly brings out the worst in people.

Twilight Zone television episodes *The Monsters are Due on Maple Street* and *The Shelter* beautifully illustrate what happens to most people under great duress; they become irrational, selfish barbarians.⁽¹¹⁾ A real life drama concerning distressed people involved pioneers headed across America to California; the starving people cannibalized each other.¹²

A more likely explanation for "no atheists in foxholes" (exceptions exist) is that atheists are generally anti-war; religious people go to war and fill those foxholes. Hence, the non-religious often claim that war and mayhem stem from Christianity, citing historical Inquisitions and Crusades. Yet this is also a distortion.

Church Inquisitions were methods used to discover, repress, and punish heresy: adherence to a religious position contrary to established Church dogma). Today, heresy is almost incomprehens-

ible, since doctrine is trivialized. But throughout Christian history, doctrines were considered the building blocks of the Faith. Adulterating Church doctrine was understandably viewed as someone besieging a castle.

The inquisitor's common idealistic response towards dissenters was sitting individuals down and teaching them properly. This often worked marvelously. Given the poor state of Europe's religious knowledge, many people, laity and clergy alike, innocently espoused falsehoods. However, a heretical hard core obstinately caused problems. For these incorrigibles, excommunication was proscribed.

However, Emperor Constantine, despite legalizing Christianity, amalgamated it with the pagan state. Subsequently, the notorious Spanish Inquisition was established by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella around 1480. All officials were appointed by the sovereigns and weren't answerable to the Church. Without modern methods of communication and travel, Church leaders had difficulty knowing what was happening.

Common responses of state laity to heresy, to clerical chagrin, were now arrest, torture, and execution, chiefly promulgated towards those who "converted" for ulterior motives. Reactively, primitive Protestants decried the Inquisition. However, after gaining power, verbose Reformers, defunct of holy intentions, hypocritically perpetuated inquisitorial horrors upon Catholics and rival Protestants, exacerbating things further. Finally impacted to the saturation point, society instigated a declamatory era of remedial Tolerance.¹³

In gross misappropriation, pseudo-scholars demonize past failures as a vast Orwellian conspiracy. The numbers of those executed is inflated from tens of thousands into tens of millions, the Catholic hierarchy is saddled with this entire fiasco, and the Church is branded the perpetrator of a medieval holocaust. An example of this distortion is linking the iron maiden, a fictional torture device produced in the nineteenth century for collectors of the macabre, with medieval churchmen.

I'm also against the Crusades, as I oppose all unnecessary war. Condemning the Crusades without condemning other wars would be hypocrisy. The Revolutionary War, universally approved by Americans, was merely based on the desire to escape British domination, resulting in the United States. Yet the United States is arguably no better than England. The War for Southern Independence ("Civil War") is celebrated with battle reenactments. World War I engendered World War II. And the Vietnam War achieved what?

Although Muslims seriously threatened to destroy other people's way of life, sparking the Crusades, the Crusades are condemned because of bigotry against Catholic Christianity. Besides, the Crusades were financially based; religion was a subtext. The Church didn't approve of all aspects of the Crusades, and even excommunicated some crusaders. The Crusades even caused positive change: helping the Mediterranean port cities to prosper, and helping to end feudalism. Summarily, the secular world was often responsible for atrocities blamed on the Church, who was merely guilty of neglect. Evils were committed by individuals, but not the entire Church, who was a beacon of light compared to others.

Even Muhammadans waged warfare on account of their culture and race, the Arab people. There's no proof that religion caused their actions. Without religion, other excuses are made to take the same actions. In summary, **the link between religion and brutality is grossly exaggerated.** However, the non-religious are correct; religious people often fail to facilitate peace.

Christian verses Christian

Most clashes between Christian believers are highly uncalled for. For example, an inspiring Christian author unfortunately damned the Catholic Church. Another renowned author liked that anti-Catholic stance, but condemned the man because he promoted "Lordship salvation," though the early Church taught Lordship salvation. A third Christian author publicly condemned the second man, because his

back problems “proved” he was cursed by God. On top of that, some Orthodox priests condemn all three men by saying that a Protestant group is not even a church.

Some groups say that only they are saved. Others angrily react, calling these groups cults. Yet we can simply ignore the undue exclusive-ism of these groups, and commend their positives. If a particular church strikes us as unchristian or pagan, let’s attend another church instead of making blanket condemnations.

Instead, various evangelists have cried that Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Baptist, or Methodist churches are ungodly. They willingly damn these groups and others, among whom are fellow Christians who love Christ but differ in some interpretations of the Bible. Yet they won’t criticize non-Christian religions that have nothing to do with Jesus Christ or openly oppose Him, to be politically correct and celebrate diversity. They are also afraid to speak against sin, if the particular sin is popular enough. Others clash over trivial matters, such as whether there should be wine or grape juice in the cup, or whether or not you should kneel in church. **Mainstream churches must stop battling each other over petty differences and focus on influencing nonbelievers instead. If they don’t, Christendom will bleed to death** via the sneaky provocation of those who oppose Christianity.

Although early churchmen condemned deviators as heretical, back then the true Church was easily identified. Today there are many diverse groups; most people are born into their respective group. Family pressure and “special pleading”: preachers aggrandizing their own group and criticizing others while ignoring contrary facts, keeps members affixed. Considering today’s circumstances, a group worshipping the triune Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and none other, may be reasonable criteria for its legitimacy, despite other deviations. Chapters 12, 13, and 17 expound on the problems with modern Christianity. Chapters 14-16 and 22 explain true Christianity.

What is important for Earth’s future is not whether Catholics trump Protestants or Protestants trump Catholics, since they all deviate from Christ’s original Church. **What is important is whether or not basic Christian morality prevails.**

How Religion Can Succeed and Triumph

Most nonreligious people have some strong values, sometimes better morals than religious people. However, this is generally untrue for society’s lowest class. Most nonreligious people who are extraordinarily unhappy with their life express great antagonism. Many talk of harming others; some act upon it. Among devout Christians, such talk is almost unheard of. Also, severe alcoholism and heavy smoking are very rare among devout Christians. Being a public drunk or human ashtray indicates that you are empty of faith convictions, and therefore substitute something else. No such people are found amidst Christian fellowships. And church fellowships are far better than hanging around seedy bars and night-clubs regardless.

Religions often fail because their founders designed a system solely for people like themselves. For example, ancient Arabs were divided into hundreds of tribes who waged constant war against each other. Therefore Muhammad and his followers wrote a book telling Arabs to unite “under God.” Islam works well for upper class Arab men. And most people following “God” follow a hand puppet of their own desires, which they call God. There’s usually an eerie similarity between God’s will and personality and their own.

Yet atheists play God and escape responsibility in their own way. Religion benefits individuals; the problem is its failure to benefit all. The solution is cultivating EMPATHY. This requires eliminating ignorance; you are not especially blessed, nor are other living things cursed, and vice versa. Every life form on planet Earth is an exact blueprint of their biology, which is dictated by their parent’s biology, along with random chance. (Desirable genetic traits is another subject I’ll address later). All people and higher animals have similar dreams, aspirations, and desires, all natural predispositions. Nobody is inherently “low-class” or “mentally ill;” nobody is “high class” or “cool.” We simply make either

good, bad, or neutral choices. Knowing these facts and taking them to heart should engender empathy, which should foster LOVE.

