

Why You Should Not Trust the Church



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Post: Postnet Suite 116, Private Bag X42,
Braamfontein, 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Website: www.zabalaza.net/zababooks

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By Scott Rittenhouse

First published by:

Insurgency Culture Collective

P. O. Box 712191

Los Angeles, CA 90071, USA

Where Religion Came From

Sociobiologists who study behaviour and its relationship to the evolution of the Human brain have asserted that in the mind of every person is the mind of a frightened primate, clinging to a tree in the darkness of night, afraid of what they cannot see in the darkness, and imagining every variety of horrors. When they imagine the vulnerability of early humans to creatures and elements in their environment, it bears a striking resemblance to the small primates who now struggle to survive in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is also very much like the mind of a small child today who lies awake fighting sleep because they are afraid of the dark or imagined "bogeymen" under their bed at night.

The basis of all superstition is fear of the unknown. It begins with basic physical and psychological needs that all people have and is derived from our earliest experiences of childhood, of not getting those things we needed or desired.

The behaviour of all people is based on these needs, which develop and become more complex as we become more independent from the security of our Mother's breast and bodily warmth and begin to assert our own individual personal identity, desires and ideas.

Fear is our most basic emotion. It is based on our experiences with aspects of life we cannot control: Death, disease, pain, weather, dangerous animals, etc. After this is want (behaviours driven by want are called "drive behaviours"): People want sex, food, warmth, companionship, health etc. These are based on chemicals and hormones created by our bodies that affect our temperament. Mating is a product of our desire for sex and companionship. Clothing and shelter are inventions devised to achieve warmth. Hunting, gathering, and cooking are products of our hunger for food. Medicine is a product of our desire for health. Long ago people watched sick animals to see which plants and roots they ate to get well when they got sick.

Our fears are driven principally by our fear of death, the physical pain and discomfort we associate with death, and the forces in nature and human society we perceive as bringers of death. We are afraid of not getting our wants (not satisfying our drive behaviours). We are afraid of things that we do not understand and, therefore, imagine to bring death or other misfortune to us.

Our wants are driven first by the desire to survive by indulging our drive behav-

Every form of religion which has breathed upon this earth has degraded women.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

If god desires that we know, love and fear him

Why does he not show himself?

If he is omniscient,

Why build him churches?

If he is omnipotent,

How can he permit that we blaspheme?

If he is just,

Why the supposition that man, whom he has created full of faults, shall be punished?

If we do good only by the grace of god,

Why should we be rewarded?

If god is inconceivable,

Why should we occupy ourselves with him?

Johann Most

It was fear that first brought gods into the world.

Petronius Arbiter

Religion is the tool of tyrants in both home and presidential palace; its mission is to break people's spirits.

Praxedis Guerrero

A union between church and state means an alliance between tyranny and hypocrisy.

Charles T. Sprading

Religion keeps the people happy, or, at least, willing to suffer.

Vince Williams

Quotes thanks to: *The Heretics Handbook of Quotations and Quotations from the Anarchists.*

Kill them all. God will easily recognise his own.

Arnold Amalrie (Advise to Crusaders at Beziers massacre)

Is god willing to prevent evil but not able?

Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able but not willing?

Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing?

Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing?

Then why call him god?

Epicurus

My earlier views at the unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation and the human origin of the scriptures, have become clearer and stronger with advancing years and I see no reason for thinking I shall ever change them.

Abraham Lincoln

What influence, in fact, have ecclesiastical establishments had on society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instances have they been the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wish to subvert the public liberty may have found an established clergy convenient allies.

James Madison

By law, public sentiment, and religion - from the time of Moses down to the present day - woman has never been thought of other than as a piece of property, to be disposed of at the will and pleasure of man.

Susan B. Anthony

The Spaniards inflicted upon us the worst superstition the world has ever known: The Catholic religion. For this alone they should be shot.

Francisco Pancho Villa

The domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick animal man - The Christian.

Fredrich Nietsche

Christians call it "faith"... I call it "the herd."

Fredrich Nietsche

No God. No Master.

Margaret Sanger

ours, then by our ego (our feeling of accomplishment when we get things we want) and our curiosity (our ambition to learn what we can know, what we can do and what will happen in our future).

The behaviour of people is knowable. The behaviour of animals is knowable. The behaviour of plants is knowable. In the past, people dependent on these things for their survival, learned their behaviour by observation. Their observations shaped the ways they saw their lives. Over time, they began to see their environment as having a personality that was similar to human personalities. They wanted the things in nature that were useful to them to befriend them just as they wished to be safe from the things in nature which could hurt them. If there is a personality to nature then, they surmised, that it could either befriend or beleaguer them. If they could find a way to make friends with other people, why couldn't they find a way to make friends with nature? When people looked at nature, they saw all creatures as male and female. Plants have a male and female aspect. All grow and fertilise and reproduce like Humans. If this is so, they perceived, perhaps other aspects of nature are also male and female. They saw their culture as having a male culture and a female culture. Perhaps those things in nature they didn't understand were also male and female. Perhaps they could also be our friends or enemies.

If nature is a friend or enemy and we label it as so, do we not start to think of it as a living thing with a personality just like people we know. Perhaps the name for friend and enemy, father and mother or things we see in the sky and on Earth become our names for the male and female personalities we see in nature. Are their not things in nature which remind us of them which we begin to use as symbols to invoke their memory. With people, the tree was a symbol of life just as the mountains took them closer to the sky where they saw the sun and rain that brought forth life. In time, it occurred to people to build their own groves of trees and mountains of rocks as symbols for the aspects of life that they depended on for their survival.

Before the invention of writing, people would tell stories to keep alive the memories of their families. After a while these stories included stories about how they had dealt with nature in the past. People tried to befriend nature (what is now called living in harmony with the Earth) because they were afraid of death. Over time, their significant historical characters seemed larger than life just like nature. Their stories evolved into myths and parables about how to live life and how to deal with problems. When people became afraid, they would remember their myths about how to befriend nature and this would make them feel safer and more confident. After a long period of time people in social groupings and communities would specialise in remembering the stories about how to befriend nature. Eventually, groups of storytellers would gather together and exchange stories. People who are afraid might see them as having a lot of knowledge or skill that they need so they could be on good terms with nature and not have to be afraid. They might approach these groups of storytellers and give them food or gifts so they will make friends with nature on their behalf.

At some point the storytellers figured out that they had a pretty good thing going so they decided to build the equivalent of a "shopping mall" for befriending nature.

Those who specialised in befriending things considered female like health, motherhood (fertility/sexuality) and food built groves of trees (they planted trees in a circle, wood posts or, later, stone megaliths). To them, a tree was the symbol of the Earth, the source of all life. Those who specialised in befriending things considered male like rain, hunting, and virility (male potency) built mounds, hills, then mountains to be closer to the sky; the source of sunlight, rain, and storms. Artificial mountains evolved into pyramids, temple mounts and acropolises. The professional storytellers became priests. The forces of nature were personified by the priests as personalities whose behaviour and temperament were experienced by people as natural occurrences, both beneficial and harmful.

The priests built their mytho-historical shopping malls where there were a lot of people who could be talked into giving them free food and free labour in exchange for promises of making nature be nice to them. Archaeologists have discovered that the pyramids of Egypt were built by volunteers living in a city next to the construction site where everybody worked at some aspect of building the pyramid or supporting the community of builders. The domestication and cultivation of food crops made scavenging for food staples unnecessary and allowed people to make more comfortable permanent settlements that offered greater physical security against nature and other groups of people. Larger permanent settlements grew out of regions where food was abundant: Rice cultivation in Asia, Wheat in the Middle East, Maize (corn) in the Americas and other grains or roots harvested for starch to make bread in places like Central America and Europe. The priests promised people good sex, good harvests, and a good life in all ways that are random in nature in exchange for a free ride and servitude. People believed this sales pitch because they didn't want to be afraid. After a while, people were growing up with the priests' stories and explanations about their superstitions. They taught these ideas to *their* children. Story telling and nature befriending became a lucrative business. To protect their sweet-heart deal, the priests created secret societies and secret rituals. The formalisation of intellectual property claims to storytelling and nature befriending techniques created organised cults. They created monopolies and tried to kill off their rival monopolies. Each city usually had its own monopoly. Some monopolies controlled their business in several cities. Priests became powerful enough to pick local rulers or take over the job for themselves. They told people that they were the absolute authority over everything and punished those who didn't obey them.

Communities were originally presided over by the heads of the household, a council of heads of households or representatives from extended families known as clans. There is no evidence that this arrangement was patriarchal or matriarchal and it probably conformed to the convenience or mutual agreement of each distinct group. Archaeological evidence confirms that these groups were not authoritarian and persons given responsibility or allowed to represent others did so at the pleasure of the others in their group and were removed if they didn't act in the interest of the group. Priests wanted to do away with this arrangement and replace it with a system they could control. They invented kings. Sometimes they made themselves kings. Over time, cities first competed with each other then went to war over mar-

The Preacher and the Slave (Labour Song)

Long-haired preachers come out every night.
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;
But when ask 'bout something to eat
They will tell you with voices so sweet:
You will eat, by and by,
In the glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

Joe Hill

Praying is like a rocking chair - it'll give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere.

Gypsy Rose Lee

Fascism is a religious concept.

Benito Mussolini

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit.

Thomas Paine

Men never do evil so completely as when they do it from religious conviction.

Blaise Pascal

Every Form of mysticism is reactionary, and the reactionary man is mystical.

Wilhelm Reich

Those pious frauds who profess their faith in the "power" of God, while they employ the police, the militia and other armed hirelings to enforce their man-made laws and maintain their "power" over their fellow men.

Albert Parsons

The man who says to men, "Believe as I do, or God will damn you," will presently say, "Believe as I do, or I shall kill you."

Voltaire

The world would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it.

John Adams

What does God mean to me? Not a damned thing! Religion is all bunk.

Thomas Edison

Quotes on Religion

God is evil.

P. J. Proudhon

Religion is a collective insanity.

Mikhail Bakunin

If God really existed it would be necessary to abolish him.

Mikhail Bakunin

Prisons are built with stones of law, brothels with bricks of religion.

William Blake

Capital, Authority, Clergy: This is the hydra that guards the gate of this prison called Earth.

Ricardo Flores Magón

Civilization will not attain to its perfection until the last stone from the last church falls on the last priest.

Emile Zola

Religion is a fraud, but it must be maintained for the masses.

Fredrick the Great (German Emperor)

While charity and religion are supposed to minister to the poor, both institutions derive their main revenue from the poor by the perpetuation of the evils both pretend to fight.

Emma Goldman

In every country and in every age the priest has been hostile to liberty; he is always in allegiance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection of his own.

Thomas Jefferson

I don't believe in God, because I don't believe in Mother Goose.

Clarence Darrow

kets, the control of resources, and transportation routes for trade. At first they would replace the local cult with their cult but over a long period of time cults were franchised into other cultures. People who traded with other cultures brought their cults with them. As communities became multi-cultural, they created stories about the relationships between the different cults. They created pantheons of many personalities that represented more complex explanations of nature and more complex cultures. Cities had patron deities but tolerated the construction of other places for people to donate to the local franchises of other cults. Some cults became very demanding. People were killed to appease gods. Virgin children were considered valuable sacrifices. Livestock were slaughtered as sacrifices. In some cultures the fighters of defeated enemies were killed as sacrifices. Women became ritual prostitutes devoted to fertility. Men had sex with them to assure that they would still be able to have sex: like a sex surrogate. Priests in charge of cults found that they could have whatever they wanted simply by promising ignorant people what they wanted to hear. People conquered in wars became slaves. Nothing the priests could imagine seemed beyond their grasp.

However, outside of the city-states that emerged from trade wars, the traditional culture of the clan and village survived. Some communities had cults but were not under the power of priests. Some communities had competing cults with no clear religious monopoly or dictatorship. The result was secular power and social systems independent of the power of cults.

The cults were jealous of secular power and the wealth it controlled and always sought to dominate it. What they couldn't control through conquest, they tried to manipulate through fraud or political wheeling and dealing. Most of the areas of the world have always been dominated by secular political power whose most powerful forms are the band (group, clan, collective, etc.), the community and the village. Religion is an invention of people, which is exploited to steal power and wealth from other people. Whatever they are not exploiting, they are trying to exploit. The act of placing faith in a cult franchises power to the inventors/exploiters of that religious idea. Placing faith in organised religion franchises power to the priests who organise it. To rely on faith to any degree is an abandonment of personal power to overcome fear and achieve your desires through your own ability. It is escapism. It is a delusion. It is slavery. Faith doesn't set you free; it steals your dreams. Ambition sets you free by driving you to pursue your dreams and achieve whatever you are willing to create and not be limited by superstition, fear or ignorance.

Where The Bible Came From

During the latter Roman Empire the power of the Emperor was used to impose the Nicene Creed as the official doctrine of a unified or "Catholic" Christian belief system. At a convention at Nicea a group of bishops of one faction of Christian Theosophies met to decide which religious books were holy and which were not and

to assemble those writings they considered divinely inspired into a bible. They debated whether or not Jesus was divine and took a vote to decide if he was a god or not. Their bible was written in Latin, which was a foreign language in most of the empire. People were forced to rely on priests to interpret their faith. The powers of Roman armies and Roman law were used to murder any Christian or non-Christian people who would not show allegiance to the Roman church and the new Roman interpretation of Christian teachings as interpreted by the pope.

All of the books of the bible began as stories passed by word of mouth in the same way many cultures still have storytellers who memorise the history of a family, clan, or nation and teach it to others. The Old Testament books were originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew. The New Testament books were originally written in ancient Greek. All of these books were changed by those who translated them, each time they were translated into a new language, so they would say what the translator wanted them to say. They used their personal interpretation of what the written word meant to determine how it should be translated. This is why there are so many different translations of the bible.

The old testament of the bible was originally written down by a political party of ancient Israel called the Pharisees to promote Hebrew nationalism and the formation of a theocratic Hebrew state in Palestine after the Israelites were freed from their captivity in Babylon. A theocracy is a dictatorship similar to modern Iran where religious leaders take over the government and impose their will on the people of a country by trickery or by force. Prior to the captivity in Babylon where the Israelites were taken as slaves when the Assyrian Empire conquered them, the Yahweh cult in Palestine was the male aspect of religious worship along side of the cult of Asherah, which was the female aspect. The fact that Israelites worshiped many gods instead of one is mentioned in several Old Testament stories. Israelite polytheism has been confirmed by archaeologists now digging at ancient city sites in Israel. Monotheism, a religion claiming that there is only a single god, is an invention of Pharisee theocrats who borrowed their dualistic ideas from Babylonian cults they were exposed to during their period of slavery. Dualism is the idea that gods and devils fight in heaven over the control of "mortal" humans. It is the idea that our lives are controlled by supernatural forces rather than our own free will. Essentially, it is a superstition like believing that black cats are bad luck. The idea of a "devil" was borrowed by the Pharisees from the Babylonians. Before the captivity in Babylon, the personalities of deities worshiped by most Bronze Age cultures were thought to be like Humans who have both good and bad character traits. In the biblical books of Moses in the Old Testament the description of the behaviour of Yahweh was very human and emotional with supernatural powers used to act out those feelings against people. This is very consistent with their expectations that the goddess Asherah would bless their harvest and make their animals fertile. After the captivity, the Pharisees used the label of "devil" to refer to any competing cult. They invented stories that their prophets were able to demonstrate the power of their deity when the priests of other cults always failed; sort of, "My god is better than your god" fables. By labelling other cults as evil they rationalised destroying the competing cults, mur-

red, white and black robes when the two messages are the same? They tell us we need to be saved from ourselves. They tell us, to be good, we must give up our freedom and do what they say. They tell us if we follow them we will become good. They tell us that all who oppose them are evil. They tell us that anything we do is O.K. so long as we serve them and their cause. Why do people think that there is a difference between the Nazi "Master Race," the Bolshevik "New Man" and talk of a god's "Chosen People?" They are all shades of the same old idea which has been around since people first erected altars and carried their "gods" into battle against their neighbours to kill, steal and rape with the blessing of their faith in their own superiority over others.

It is not the use of violence to dominate others that makes people great, it is their ability to co-exist in harmony and mutually aid each other. Getting along with other people is the hardest thing for people to do. It is their greatest challenge. Jesus is quoted as saying this repeatedly in the gospels of the Christian bible but this is not the message of the church. We must be suspicious of any religion that teaches domination, superiority or obedience rather than co-operation, harmony and freedom. We are only free when we are equally free and no freedom is at the expense of another. This is the true meaning of harmony: to make everyone equally free. Each person has the capacity for good within themselves, the capability of doing good if it is their own desire to do so and the freedom of choice to determine our own actions. Since any evil act makes us less free, the quest for freedom is the key to freeing us from evil. Since we all have freedom of choice we cannot free ourselves from evil by letting others tell us what to do. We can only free ourselves by controlling evil intentions within our own egos. Religion cannot make us free. We must free ourselves.

Like the so-called "divine right of kings" (the idea invented by the church that their deity gives kings the right to be depots over the rest of us, to own us like property and to do to us anything they please and that the church says who the deity wants to be king), the idea that our freedom must be defined by rights which are protected by governments owned by the rich is another myth invented by the church during the reformation in order to protect their power when monarchies were replaced by parliamentary republics. In truth, we are born free with or without the blessing of the church so neither the church nor a government, which they have blessed, can give us something we already have. All they can do is take it away and ration it back to us. They then lie to us and tell us we owe our freedom all to them so we should return the favour with our servility, our money and our faith. In a bizarre irony, those who wish to exploit us try to convince us to be grateful for being exploited. They want us to reward them for trying to hurt us. Instead we should laugh them out of town. We should scorn them. We should put them in their place. We should break free of their tyranny and think for ourselves. We should destroy all tyranny and enable all people to live free.

that won't hold up to scrutiny. Why do soldiers on both sides of a conflict believe that there is one and only one deity and that deity is on their side in the war, when their own bible opposes killing and advocates mercy, generosity and peacemaking? Their church tells them that it is O.K. for them to be a killer and that they are doing "god's work" or fulfilling "god's will." Their government invoked religion to get them to fight for the ruling class and authority, which want to enslave them. Common sense should tell them that it is the rich and powerful that want soldiers to fight and die to save their ass and make them richer, not a god. When the church sides with the rich and powerful, they are trying to benefit themselves; not save souls. War is never more than a contest among profiteers where the working person is merely an expendable resource to his or her self-serving masters. It is no god that treats human life so frivolously; only the selfishness of those who wish to protect their privileges at the expense of the rest of us and those who would prostitute themselves in the service of these privileged elites for the purpose of Earthly rewards.

We have no proof or disproof of the existence of a deity but, if there were some all-powerful intelligence it is irrational and egoistic of people to assume that Humanity would hold any more significance than any other part of existence or that any form of god-like supernatural intelligence would be interested in dictating to a galactically insignificant species like Humanity (*Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, to be specific). It is insecurity that motivates people to want to have a supernatural protector to take away problems they don't have the courage, intelligence or perseverance to take personal responsibility for. To believe you could affect the ego or sympathy of a deity is truly Human egoism, arrogance and ignorance. You can't kiss ass on a god. It is a fact that all behaviours people attribute to deities are nothing more than Human behaviours exaggerated to god-like proportions, idealisms and perfections. No real supernatural intelligence would want worship because, knowing all, they would have no need of the reassurance of their self-worth that worship would reinforce. They would simply understand and accept their nature and their place in existence. It is Humans that feel inadequate and fearful of their mortal weaknesses. All superstition is based on the fear of these inadequacies and all organised religions exploit these fears to control people by coercing and persuading them to obey their clergy in exchange for their granting an illusion of security and hope.

If any mysterious or supernatural force or being were to place themselves above everything and demand obedience, it would be our moral obligation to oppose them and call on others to join us in opposition because authoritarianism is immoral. No one should be a slave, no matter how golden his or her prison is alleged to be. No one with our interest at heart would try to enslave us. We must therefore be suspicious of anyone claiming that they want to save us rather than telling us to save ourselves. No one takes away the freedom of others except to benefit themselves. All would-be dictators claim that freedom is evil, obedience to them is good and that they only want to help us. In truth, they want to help themselves at our expense. Why are people less threatened by a cross (a painful execution device) than a swastika? Why is a fish warmer than a hammer and sickle? Why do people only see the dictators painted in the propaganda of the corporate media and not those in

dering their priests, and committing genocide on other cultures as a crusade against evil. They also made everyone terrified of resisting them by inventing a system of religious laws for which dissent was a crime and stoning (death by internal bleeding from being pummelled-to-death by rocks) was the only punishment! The same type of rationale has been used since in witch-hunts, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Native American Genocide, and contemporary anti-Semitism and fundamentalism.

The Pharisees wanted to take over and unite all the people of the 12 tribes into one nation that they could control. In their writings they advocate Draconian social laws designed to control people, total female slavery to men, and genocide against other people who are not members of the 12 tribes. It is very similar to the Master Race babble Hitler used to take over Germany in the 1920's and 1930's. It is not surprising that the Nazis in today's so-called "Christian Identity Movement" claim to be descended from a mythical lost 13th tribe of Israel. In the new testament of the bible Jesus repudiates the racism and tyrannical social doctrines of the Pharisees and challenges their hypocrisy. Christian Fundamentalists are the Pharisees of today, borrowing from Puritanical ideas of the Reformation not the reformism and egalitarianism of the original Reformation movement but the extremist social doctrines of reactionary church societies that tried to use Puritanism and ignorance to promote their personal power and wealth.

All of the books of the new testament of the bible were written more than 100 years after the death of Jesus by local cults that perceived him to be the son of a monotheistic deity. The term "son of god" as used in the time of Jesus did not mean a deity. It referred to a man who had achieved the highest level of enlightenment by study, meditation, and the way he lived his life. Cults that arose after the death of Jesus interpreted this to be a fulfilment of Hebrew nationalist propaganda which promised that a messiah would deliver the 12 tribes of Israel from their Egyptian, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman, etc. conquerors. Some scholars believe that there is evidence that during the portion of his life not recorded in the New Testament, Jesus travelled and studied throughout the Middle East and Asia learning the religion and philosophy of many cultures and that he was misunderstood when he returned to Palestine to teach what he had learned. The so-called miracles of the bible were the invention of Greek and Roman Jesus cults who thought that working magic was the way a deity would act and that asserting the existence of miracles would help convince people to join their cults. Religious scholars tell us that the parables used by Jesus to make a social commentary on the society he was living in were a common aspect of the Hebrew culture at that time. The suspect nature of the claim to miracles is supported by the contradictions regarding them in the gospels, which are the accounts of the life of Jesus by various cult factions. The other parts of the New Testament are clearly accounts of the cults and their followers. There are significant contradictions between the teachings of Jesus in his sermons and parables and the philosophy of the Jesus cults, which became the Christian church. It is clear that the poor and enslaved subjects of the Roman Empire saw in Jesus what they wanted to see: someone to give them hope and help them forget how oppressed their lives were. When Christianity was made the offi-

cial religion of the empire its message was changed to justify the authority of the empire and promote the power of the Church. It was turned into an instrument of social control by the Roman government that was looking for a new way to hold the empire together.

The History Of The Church

After the convention at Nicea, the unified or "Catholic" church (the word "Catholic" means unified) headquartered itself in Rome and began using the power of the Roman government and military to destroy its religious competition. They began with people who professed to believe in Christian teachings that were not approved by the priests loyal to Constantine by torturing and murdering all those who dissented. The Roman Empire was home to many cults. With the power of the government behind them, the church began to destroy all places of worship of these competing cults and murder all their followers they could not convince under torture to join the new Catholic church. The church sent its priests out into other nations to try to create followings of the authorised Christian cult but its priests had a lot of difficulty convincing cultures with long traditions of democracy, egalitarianism, familial love, cultivation of the earth, and co-operation to accept a belief system based on shame, obedience to dictatorship, poverty, denial of physical and emotional feelings, domination over people and nature, and extermination of so-called unbelievers or "heathen". In order to deceive these cultures into accepting this new cult, the church invented saints that were modeled after the polytheistic pantheons of the Celtic and German cultures that they were trying to conquer and dominate. The church was in competition with the old religions of many cultures for a long time and concluded that only by being able to command the superstitions of these people could they destroy their competition and take control. Not only did they steal their deities, they took over the cultures of these people as well by inventing church celebrations to coincide with traditional local ones and replace the traditional holidays. The holiday of Christ Mass was moved to the winter solstice to coincide with the winter solstice where people had previously prayed to the sun to stop shortening the days and destroying life and begin the life cycle of the seasons again. The holiday of Easter was invented to replace the spring festival of fertility when people prayed for a successful harvest and for fertile childbearing. People who still maintained the old traditions, like the Maypole that symbolised the tree of life at the spring feast, were persecuted or killed until they were driven underground in witch hunts.

When the Roman Emperor conceived one religion it was his intention to use it to preserve his empire against those who would threaten or challenge him. He entered into an unholy alliance with the clergy of the church. The church agreed to say that the emperor was given his job by their god and in return the emperor agreed to protect the pope, the church, and all the wealth, power, and property of the church. This agreement was continued with the medieval kings and queens and later with parlia-

demagogues tell these people that the easy solution to their problems is to have blind faith in their "leadership" or to have blind faith in a deity whose wishes can only be properly explained by their self-styled "leaders" (which is the same thing as being asked to do whatever the "leader" says), they do it and feel threatened by anyone or anything which questions or threatens their Fascist ideas or "leaders." They will do whatever they are told, and think how they are told to think, just to hold on to their illusion of security. The church plays the Fascist role by pretending to care for people. It asks people to put their faith in the clergy of the church and to do whatever they say. It is a waste of time to challenge people's right to be superstitious, have belief systems, or have faith because some people have always done these things to some degree. What should be challenged is the exploitation of these beliefs by people, governments, churches and other institutions. It is also a waste of time to argue theories about metaphysical ideas since there is no scientific *proof* of the existence or *non*-existence of a deity, devil, demon or other supernatural being, creature or force outside of their being conceived in a persons imagination (i.e. no one can say for certain if there *is* or *is not* a deity so why argue about it?). They are solely a product of the faith of a person who chooses to believe they exist. All belief systems are psychologically traceable to the primitive superstitions of the mind - the same ones that make small children afraid of the dark. Likewise there is no proof of any divine rulebook for living life, either etched in stone or divinely inspired. The claim of divine inspiration, however, has always been a tool of con men and women masquerading as some sort of missionary. They exploit people's desire to find security in their faith, to con them into believing that the desires, ambitions or rules invented by ordinary people are somehow divine. It has been easy for unscrupulous people to trick people into accepting a tyrannical authoritarian dictatorship simply by claiming to speak for a deity or to have divine authority or divine permission to do whatever they want to do.

But, being good or evil has nothing to do with whether or not you obey authority, conform to social norms and prejudices, or comply with the laws made by people in government, churches, the military or elsewhere. All ethical behaviour in life is based on basic perceptions of justice summed up by the "Golden Rule" which says you shouldn't do things to others which would harm you if they were done to you (e.g. you perceive something to be hurtful and wrong when done to someone else because you wouldn't like it if someone did it to you. This feeling or perception of injustice is called *empathy* or *solidarity*). Anyone who tells you differently just wants to control you, to exploit you and to hurt you. They want you to be their slave so they can use you to pump up their ego. Ethical conduct is not based on following a set of rules, belonging to any organisation or being born into a certain family, culture or ethnic group. Evil behaviour is driven by people's ego, which tells them that they are more important than others so it is O.K. for them to hurt others if it benefits them. So, in a sense, those people who want to control others by exploiting religion are the *real* evil. Ethical behaviour involves knowing your own ego (feeling good about yourself and not feeling insecure) and not letting yourself be tempted into exploiting others. It also involves questioning what you are told and not just accepting anything as fact

they disguise as evangelism. These tax-free church-owned corporations pollute the air waves with broadcasting which is 100% political and profit-driven in order to spread their messages of bigotry and slavery. Religious broadcasting is devoted solely to indoctrination and fundraising to make the self-styled "televangelist" rich. They disguise Fascist propaganda as legitimate news reporting with programs like the "700 Club" which push the agenda of Fascist front groups like the "Christian coalition." They have perverted government laws to require private cable companies to carry their religious broadcasting channels which broadcast 24 hours of Fascist political propaganda, testimonials about the pleasures of submitting to church authority, and guilt trips.

The American Constitution prohibits the government from making any laws regarding an institution of religion. This is more than a separation of church and state. It says that government cannot make laws to force religion on people. The church circumvents this by using their power to try to force church-sponsored lawmakers on us who will impose the church's agenda through the power of the government. If there were true separation of church and state, the church would be self-sufficient and not out to control the government. This has never been true. The church favours the idea of separating church and state only as far as it gives them unlimited power, which is protected by the government. In truth, it is their ambition to become the government. The power of the church is a power created by the collusion of powerful men and women. The church is not a god, a faith, or a philosophy. It is a group of ambitious people with a common set of objectives, which they hope to reach by tricking other people into submitting to unconditional obedience to their authority, which they disguise with words like faith, love, and humility. When they tell you to trust in their god, what they mean is to trust them and obey them when they tell you what to do and how to think. How are these policies different from the attempted totalitarianism of Nazis, Communists and Islamic Fundamentalists? The church will not be satisfied until it can create a totalitarian culture and political system. They are the strongest advocates for creating a massive system of prisons, police, and espionage/surveillance under the premise of fighting drugs and crime. In truth, this is a propaganda excuse to trick the rest of us into tolerating a police state.

Beware of Wolves in Lambs' Clothing

It is the same desire for easy solutions to problems, instead of getting off your ass and working to improve things yourself, which led to the global rise of Fascism in the 1920's and 1930's and which fuels current day fundamentalist ideas. It has been said that people believe what they want to believe. When people are afraid, some of them want to believe that a supernatural power will save them. When people don't understand something, some of them want an explanation that is easy for them to understand. When they don't understand something they are afraid of, they want an easy solution to their problem. When soothsayers, con artists and Fascist

mentary governments (like those of the United States and European nations) who established a national church by law. In the United States all churches are established by law by the separation of church and state which allows the church to have unlimited wealth, political power, and the unquestioned protection of the government. The present incarnation of this unholy alliance began with the so-called "divine right of kings." After the Roman Empire began to break apart, the church invented the idea of blessing the crowning of any new kings. The kings, of course, took full advantage of this by declaring that the blessing of god gave them the right to absolute power over their "subjects." Absolutism is authority without limit to rape, murder, torture, rob, buy, sell, brutalise, and decimate all people within the geographic area a king was able to control with their armies. People were literally the legal property of their self-appointed king like any other animal used for forced labour. These self-made kings were a combination of local land owners whose control had begun under the political authority of the Roman Empire and conquering soldiers from Germanic and other invaders who took land away from its original owners after they defeated the Roman Armies and destroyed the power of Roman Government over an area like Gaul (present day France). With the blessing of the church, these landowners (many of which were retired Roman soldiers or mercenaries) and conquering soldiers organised criminal organisations much like the Mafia, Yakuza, or street gangs of today and appointed themselves kings over all the land, people, and resources they could subdue by force in exchange for protecting the wealth, property, and exclusive religious franchise of the Church. In other words, these gangsters provided strong-arm services to destroy any religions in competition with the church or who might challenge their religious monopoly (like a modern day protection racket).

During the following years of the Middle Ages the highest culture was in the Islamic world which expanded rapidly soon after the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire. They were the sole preservers of knowledge in the world. In areas where the catholic monopoly was in control the only storage places of books were in church monasteries and only the clergy and a minority of kings were able to read and write. All books were copied by hand in Latin and Latin was established as the sole common language of learning in areas under church control. Access to all knowledge was strictly controlled and only approved ideas were made available to those members of the ruling class allowed to learn Latin. In the Middle Ages only the oldest son was allowed to inherit their father's wealth and property. Often, sons who were not first born became monks or priests and daughters who could not be married off by their fathers (who legally owned them) became nuns. Thus, the clergy quickly came to be composed almost exclusively of people born into the ruling class. Thus, access to education was limited almost exclusively to those born into the ruling class. Without the benefit of education, the rest of the population was extremely vulnerable to prejudices and superstitions. They were virtual slaves to the teachings of their ministers and their fears about so-called "eternal damnation", which were planted in their heads by ambitious clergymen.

The clergy were the only people allowed to read the bible and all instruction on the authorised way to do this was dictated by the pope. This was helped along by

mass illiteracy and restricting access to books. In addition to the bible, the church created an elaborate series of rituals, ceremonies, and liturgies designed to impress their followers. In order to make people feel insignificant, they ordered the construction of enormous cathedrals, which would dwarf anyone coming into them, and make them feel at the mercy of the power of the church. They filled the cathedrals with idols, altars, candles and other artefacts that they used in their ceremonies and invented songs to say good things about their deity. The songs and incantations of the liturgy were in Latin to make people feel completely helpless and dependent on their priest to intercede for them and keep their mean and temperamental god from being pissed off at them.

Among the teachings invented by the clergy was the invention of witchcraft, which was created by monks in their monastery libraries during the Middle Ages as a way to demonise the old religions of Europe to make it easier for them to destroy these ideas and take over and control the people living in those regions. The *Malleus Malificarum* was written by a monk claiming to know how to spot a witch. It was particularly critical of women who did not blindly obey their fathers or submit to their husbands and anyone displaying individuality or dissenting against the church. It required government or church officials to torture anyone who was too independent a thinker, including early scientists, doctors, midwives, and anyone else whose intelligence threatened the clergy or the ruling class. Witchcraft was commonly added to charges of treason and sedition (i.e. dissent) against a so-called "lawful king" which were levied against anyone resisting the absolutism (i.e. absolute authority) of feudal and monarchical governments, which were sanctioned by church officials. Accusing a person of witchcraft was a common technique used by the church or ruling class to steal a person's property. Usually, the person was accused of some form of "odd" behaviour.

The idea of a so-called "anti-christ", demons, devils and other supernatural forces of evil was invented by the catholic church about the same time as their invention of witchcraft during the inquisition hysteria of the Middle Ages. Europeans in the Middle Ages didn't bathe and dumped raw human faeces (shit) into their streets and rivers. They used oils and perfumes to try to cover up the smell if they were rich enough to afford them. As a result, their cities were filled with disease and plagues were common and rampant. The doctors at the time thought fevers were caused by bad blood (when in truth they are caused by the body fighting off infection) and felt threatened by herbal medicine they didn't understand (many of the drugs most commonly used today, like aspirin, came from herbal medicine). They bled people who were sick, which countered the body's ability to fight disease. To the superstitious people of the day, the plagues were caused by some evil supernatural force rather than their own poor hygiene and medicinal ignorance. When demagogic priests blamed their problems on demons and devils they were easily persuaded. Events like the "Black Death" (the Bubonic Plague) terrified the people who then wanted simple explanations for their problems. This should sound familiar to the present day.

During the Middle Ages Christian kings warred constantly with each other and with non-Christian kings who followed the old religion and the new Islamic cult.

schools, public libraries, public and commercial television and radio programs, movies and every other medium of artistic or creative cultural expression or information. They want to ban books so they can restrict what everyone can read and think. They want to censor music, television, and movies to promote their social prejudices. They want to take away all government financial and medical aid to the poor so that they will be totally dependent on the church and have to obey the church or starve. They want to reduce wages so that more people will be poor and dependent. Churches have been among the leading opponents of the organisation of labour unions to protect the rights of working people, fight for humane working conditions, and improve their wages and quality of life. Churches have strongly promoted international economic and military strategies that would allow them to spread their political campaigns around the World.

Churches proliferate like drug dealers and liquor stores in the poorest neighbourhoods occupying commercial property that would otherwise provide job opportunities for the people living in the neighbourhoods. Churches tell the poor to place their hope in death, that only death can free them from poverty and slavery, and to have faith in Christian witch doctors. Many of them are operated by swindlers masquerading as ministers out of storefront chapels who exploit the desperation of the poor to get money for doing nothing. But even the denominations which cloak themselves in self-righteous respectability expect to live off fleecing the poor by passing the collection plate with a religious guilt trip among poor people who struggle daily to afford to be able to feed, clothe, and shelter their children. All of the preachers empty lectures on faith won't feed hungry children, pay to make a sick family member well, or help a family afford to buy a bed to sleep in, but their hard earned money might if it weren't conned out of them by the church. In poor, ethnic, and non-white communities, churches are among the strongest supporters of political machines. Through their ministers and church-based development corporations called "community non-profit corporations" wealthy and powerful politicians funnel taxpayer money to the church in exchange for kickbacks and the churches endorsement for their political allies at election time.

Churches buy protection from politicians in exchange for special privileges from the government. Churches use public services without paying for them with taxes, forcing everyone to finance church activities with their tax payments whether they want to or not. They are allowed to run untaxed private schools, untaxed businesses and untaxed gambling halls, which make them more wealthy and powerful and finance their campaigns to take over the government and the media. Church charities take advantage of tax exemption laws to make their operators rich from government grants and private donations under the pretext of helping the homeless, the hungry, drug addicts, alcoholics and orphans. Church schools are brainwashing children to accept unquestioning obedience to the authoritarianism of the church and government and to be afraid of freedom, social equality, and economic justice. They take money away from public schools, which are funded, based on enrolment, and undermine the ability of public schools to educate the children of working people. Churches use their tax-exempt status to create huge propaganda machines, which

What Has The Church Done For You Lately?

The principle role of religion today continues to be to provide social control to mollify the working classes and to legitimise the wealth and exploitation of the capitalist and ruling classes. This is done by telling people to tolerate slavery if they want to be rewarded in an afterlife and that blind faith is their only guarantee that there will be an afterlife. It also tells evil people that if they join a group professing allegiance to the church that they can do whatever bad things they want as long as they say they are "sorry" afterwards, because the Christian deity will forgive anything. The primary behaviour promoted as a virtue by all religion is obedience to authority. All monotheistic theology is based on this premise. By claiming to enact the "will of god" many great evils have been done by many self-promoting people. To this day, all governments hide their crimes behind a claim of godliness. And godliness is perverted to resemble the will of human authoritarianism.

The political legacy of the church has followed it to the present day. Throughout history the church has tried to control governments, promote the wealth and power of their leaders, and persecute anyone who didn't agree, to think like they were told to think by the church. The church is a power institution with little in common with the teachings of Jesus except 2000 years of distorting them in order to manipulate people. Jesus preached love and forgiveness and condemned hypocrisy. The church preaches hate and fear and condemns dissent. Jesus condemned wealth and arrogance and told the rich that they could not buy their way into being good people. The church tells you to save your soul by giving them money and then tries to use the power of government and censorship to tell us how to think. The biggest joke is the idea of an anti-christ, which is at the core of the rantings of many revival sideshows and fire and brimstone fundamentalist preachers.

Churches today are not satisfied with the right to practice their so-called faith. They want to have the power of government to force other people to conform to their behavioural codes and religious beliefs. Churches distort the ideas expressed in their own scriptures to promote their own personal power and social agenda. These interpretations are so flaky that devotees do not know most of what is in their own scriptures and church catechisms, and disagree on what those things they do know are supposed to say. Fascist front groups like "Focus on the Family" and the so-called "Christian Coalition" have taken this a step further by using the worst aspects of old testament draconian authoritarianism, puritanical repression, and 19th Century English social prejudices to justify their reactionary political ideas and promote their personal political ambitions. Churches in many states get so-called "blue laws" passed which make it a criminal offence to shop or run your business on a Sunday. Churches, through Fascist front groups like the "Christian Coalition", want to limit what children can learn about their own history and culture. They want to force all children to be indoctrinated with their political opinions and religious beliefs in public

Christian kings used the religious test to deny Jewish people the legal right to own land and force them to become merchants and traders to survive economically. This segregation was later used in the 1800s by the Christians who invented anti-Semitism and white supremacy to claim that there was a "Jewish conspiracy." The ruling class used the religious test to steal from non-Christians who were denied the protection of Christian law. During the Middle Ages several priests went on political campaigns through Christian kingdoms claiming to have had a vision from their deity ordering them to lead a sacred mission to Jerusalem and murder all the non-Christians that they encountered on the way. The resulting series of "crusades" resulted in the needless killing of thousands of people and in the end achieved nothing except a limited technological exchange between Europeans and the Islamic cultures.

As the power of the church grew, many church officials became extremely corrupt. Disagreements over what types of behaviour and lifestyle should be approved by the church leadership led to fictionalisation within the church. Clergymen created their own orders of beliefs within the church and eventually some of these orders questioned the dictates of the pope. The Inquisition was the pope's response to rebellion against papal authority. Anyone who could be shown as demonstrating reluctance to accept papal authority and dogma was labelled a heretic and condemned to death. It began with investigations within the clergy and quickly spread to non-clergy individuals. The Inquisition was purely political and was used against anyone outside the church who was believed to threaten the church or the interests of the church. During the inquisition thousands of religious dissenters were slaughtered for disagreeing with the church or being inconvenient to politicians and clergy loyal to the church. Catholic kings and queens were enlisted to persecute and murder those people the church didn't like. With this power, these monarchs used the license of the church to terrorise, rob, and murder all of their opponents. People were murdered by crushing them to death beneath a board loaded with rocks (the practice was called "pressing"), by drowning, or by being burned alive. Having a scar, a birthmark, or a birth defect was enough evidence for the church to condemn a person to death. The notorious "Spanish Inquisition" was collusion between the Spanish government and the Spanish Catholic Church to destroy their political rivals and consolidate power after the last Moorish kings had been forced off the Iberian Peninsula by Spanish military conquests. The Spanish Inquisition was particularly notorious for murdering Sephardic Jews, Moors, and any other political enemies of the government, the church, or the landowners loyal to the church. The inquisition was active through the time of the Reformation where Protestant Christians were labelled as heretics and murdered.

The Reformation began as an attempt by Catholic reformers to eliminate church corruption and make the Christian faith available to everyone. The church took bribes and extorted money (so-called "indulgences") from people by telling them that they could buy their way into a better place in heaven (a place of social privilege). Churches were filled with idols and icons and painted with obscene amounts of gold paid for by extorting uneducated and impoverished parishioners who were told that

their soul was at risk if they didn't co-operate. Clergymen were frequently involved in political intrigue and were known to engage in all manner of sex acts with children, nuns, or each other. Children were sometimes kidnapped for the use by powerful clergy or aristocrats for this purpose. Runaways and orphans were especially vulnerable since they could be killed afterwards and no one would notice their absence. The clergy were known to advocate acts of torture to exact confessions, punishments, or the exorcism of "demons" (usually "odd", unexplained, or sexual types of behaviour). Reformers translated the Catholic bible and church songs (psalms) into the language of ordinary people, but, still only the wealthy and the emerging merchant class (the Bourgeoisie or "Middle" Class) could read or write. They rejected the idea that only the church could tell people what to believe but, in place of the Pope, they put their own clergy. The response to the corruption of Catholicism was the harshness of Puritanism which advocated plain dress, unadorned meeting houses as places of worship, chastity, complete subservience to peer pressure (called "humility"), strict codes of social conduct (like forbidding people to dance, drink, or be alone with a person of the opposite gender unless they were your spouse), and corporal punishment for all disobedience or rule-breaking. Puritans became so obnoxious and irritating to ordinary people that they were often hounded out of their country of origin. In England, King Henry VIII used the reformation as a pretext to confiscate all the property of the Catholic Church and keep its lands and wealth for himself. He then used all of the confiscated property as bribes and rewards for members of the English aristocracy who did him favours.

The reformation happened largely as a result of the merchant class amassing enough wealth and power to want its own religion. Catholicism was essentially the religion of the ruling nobility whose incestuous relationship with the church legitimised their absolutism in exchange for preserving the church's right to fleece the poor. After the reformation occurred, this arrangement remained the same with Protestant countries except that the players changed. After the reformation, the church condoned capitalism, colonialism, mercantilism, genocide, and the military and police enforcement of poverty and merchant class social privileges (through means like "poor laws" which made debt punishable by imprisonment, slavery, or exile to a penal colony and labelled any attempt by workers to organise a criminal offence). In exchange, the merchant class preached religious freedom, temperance, and the puritan "work ethic" (which was essentially so-called "humility" applied to encourage total servility to merchant aristocrat bosses and politicians).

To counter the reformation, the pope established the order of the Jesuits as a form of Catholic Storm Troopers intended to recruit new people into the Catholic Church and expose as "heretics" anyone who was disloyal to papal authority. At the same time many strange orders of priests and monks were formed around cults of personality that claimed to know the way to find Jesus or to be a reform movement espousing "true" priestly or Christian values. Francis of Assisi was an Italian monk who believed that ostentatious displays of abject poverty and humility could relieve him of his guilt from having killed people in papal wars. The opportunistic pope was quick to exploit Francis to solicit sympathy from the poor so they wouldn't object to

the ostentatious displays of church wealth and corruption that had become commonplace. Other orders of priests involved in the counter-reformation practiced sadomasochistic rites and ceremonies in the belief that acts like self-flagellation would beat the badness out of them and impress their deity with their humility and obedience. These orders spread like cults throughout Europe until they began gaining political influence, which the pope believed, could threaten his dictatorship over the Catholic Church. In response to this, many of the leaders of these orders were murdered on the orders of the pope and others were sent overseas to European colonies to do "missionary" work.

While the church was claiming to reform itself in the counter-reformation, church officials took political power in many European countries and began a series of wars against countries with Protestant monarchs. The church sanctioned the enslavement or murder of thousands of Native American, Asian, and African people by Europeans eager to rob the world of its wealth. First, the Pope sanctioned an agreement between Spain and Portugal to divide the world in half. Then, the English, French, and later European Americans murdered thousands on Native Americans by war and disease to steal their land. Genocide against natives was a common practice in both catholic Spanish colonies and puritan Protestant colonies. Diseased people were intentionally sent to native nations so that many people would get sick and die and soften up the native American nation for United States troops to invade and murder all the remaining people who would not give up their land voluntarily to the U.S. government for resale to settlers, land speculators, and capitalists.

The church condoned the slave trade on the condition that the slaves would be forced to become Christians. Religion was used to mollify both Native Americans and African people sold into slavery to keep them from rebellion. Many slaves worked on church land in the mission system in the Americas. The priests and monks in the mission system were heavily populated by sadomasochistic orders, which sent them overseas to keep them from gaining political power in Europe. The priests believed that the humility of slavery was good for the "souls" of Native Americans who they regarded as "children", "natural thieves", "sexually immoral", "lazy" and racially inferior. They thought that if they forced the natives to live like them and submit to the authority of the church, and humiliate themselves, that this would appease the anger of the Christian deity and make him sympathetic to them. They were also concerned about sending glowing progress reports back to the pope in Rome so that he would keep sending them supplies to live off of. Through slavery, many missions became rich and began competing with other European colonists. When the other colonists saw this they became jealous and convinced the government to order the mission system dismantled so that they could take all its lands and slaves. But, even after large landowners were the only ones who could own slaves, the landowners kept the slaves going to church to encourage them to be docile.