

Ten innocent rules of religion

Eminently sensible rules that no normal rational person could object to

- 1 Your religion shouldn't hurt others.**
Including children. Including your children.
- 2 You shouldn't be hurt by your religion.**
Or by leaving it.
- 3 Religious people shouldn't expect respect for believing in fairystories and miracles.**
And being led by priests who make things up as convenient.
- 4 Other sects are just as fanatical and bigoted as yours.**
So just call it quits, because it annoys the hell out of normal people.
- 5 Selectively ignoring parts of Holy Scriptures destroys any credibility in the rest.**
For example: Exodus 35:2 *For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death.*
- 6 Priests might claim to selflessly bring comfort but actually it's conditional on believing.**
Fear and guilt. Calamitous consequences of sin. Grovelling repentance. Casting-out are menaces. Strange how it's always the Devil who gets a bad press for buying souls, but it's fine for priests to do the exact same thing.
- 7 When religions tell normal people what they can and can't do they get very irritated.**
Even worse, when everyone is supposed to respect irrational beliefs and invented dogma. Even worse when normal people are not allowed to interfere with quite obviously damaging practices.
- 8 Tradition is no excuse for repugnant behaviour such as misogyny and dogmatic persecution.**
Hiding behind 'culture' is cowardly and false and unacceptably out of date.
- 9 The majority of people are perfectly capable of behaving decently without religious guidance.**
Also they can be better trusted to deal impartially with those who religions have prejudices against. Furthermore they are less likely to be trapped by hypocrisy caused by clash of religious teaching and real life. Furthermore vulnerable people are less likely to be recruited into a cult.
- 10 Religions should be honest about the money they collect.**
Some seem to spend an awful lot on very fancy buildings, limousines and private jets.

Introduction

Organised religions are massive international frauds based on indoctrination and fear. It's time for normal people to fight back and show those caught in their clutches the utter evil being perpetrated in their name, supposedly on their behalf. This infestation of society needs to be dealt with.

Innocent question: Why do churches have lightning rods?

Normal people can justifiably smirk at this perfectly reasonable question. Religious people shift uneasily and try to change the subject. Quite simply, they don't have a proper answer. You have caught them completely naked. No fig-leaf or anything. It's very embarrassing to show your friend they are idiots. You're not calling people idiots, but showing it to themselves.

You try telling Christians and Moslems they can't both be right with only one true god and you'll get bogged down in the quicksand of illogicality and blatant fudge. **So don't do that!** Instead ask them to explain an anomaly that's obvious to normal people and watch them bog themselves down. These rules are innocent provocations along those lines. Who can't accept them?

You won't make any friends by doing this but you'll probably lose them. Eek! That's because cults put adherence to religion above personal friendship. Isolating their victims and substituting formula-group-belonging is how they work. Service before self. That's before the Tiananmen-square level pressure to conform from family and community.

If you're in public with strangers then tell them you don't give a fuck about their fantasy world. It's their odious effect on others and demand to being respected that bothers you.

These ten rules are completely sensible to normal people. Who could possibly object to any of them? Perfectly innocent rules. Innocent in the lightning-rod sense. You may wish to look at the detailed notes below or have a bit of a think about why they're so 'innocent'. You can have lots of fun poking the religiously obsessed with obvious

contradictions. *There's no rule against enjoying their discomfort.* When they say "How dare you call my book of holy scripture Fairy Stories!" you can give them a mighty smirk. When they claim "My opinion is as good as yours!" you can reply with a straight "Nope! Lunacy by indoctrination is a sure-fire way to undermine credibility." Normal, rational, people are entitled to something more than 'because the voices tell me.' Just because somebody gets very angry when they insist two plus two equals five; because lots of people chant it; because it's written in holy letters by God herself; because the Pope says so; because if you don't accept it then you're getting some serious abuse or sent home from school, doesn't make it right. In fact the more they insist, the more the disease needs to be dealt with. Make them explain or shut-up because you won't be taking any notice their hurt whingeing. **Remember: The more they rely on being outraged to try to bully you, the more worthless their grounds are.**

The temptation is to leave the deluded alone. It's a big temptation because bigots don't mess about when it comes to enforcement. The big-wigs claim they're powerless to stop their packs of wolverines. So that would be a well-established organisation 'dedicated to doing good' and definitely not evil, oh no never, throwing up its hands with a sigh. Yeah really? So holy war, Fatwabs, shunning, expulsion from school, legal action and vilification on social media are nothing to do with the humane and honest godfathers. Of course not.

Weddings and funerals are a bummer. When I'm invited to church dos I sit in the porch outside until the rituals and god-worship are over. I'm happy with my own thoughts and conversation with the other outsiders. Often we're a diverse but chatty group who are perfectly capable of honouring our friend without psalms, readings, hymns and GOD. (And god-awful poems, but that's another subject.) It's the social pressures that force people into church not a belief in the almighty. Pretty fraudulent. That's where religions neutralise normal people. I think it's a fact of life. Try to avoid but if not then don't actively participate and certainly not disrupt.

Notes and details

1

Your religion shouldn't hurt others.

Including children. Including your children.

Brainwashing children is wrong. **WRONG.** **W-R-O-N-G.** Singing, repeated indoctrination, making them say their prayers in a closed world where believing in Jesus, or any other God, is the only accepted way, is brainwashing. Where 'respected' adults accept dogma at face values then children don't have a chance. *Any sort of indoctrination is wrong. Directing it at youngsters without any critical thinking skills is sick.*

There is no excuse for it. People who believe silly stuff like 'God want's it' or 'It doesn't do any harm' are deluded, ignorant and misguided. There's a name for the sort of person who thinks brainwashing children is acceptable: **Pervert.** Ask the Archpervert of Canterbury. Watch him weasel!

Any sort of brainwashing is wrong.

"I can bring-up my children how I like!" No you can't. Does God say you should brainwash them by making them say prayers? What would you say if other parents kept insisting to their children that Santa Claus, unicorns

and the black-man who crept out of the cupboard at night if they were bad were real? Happy with that? "God doesn't like [fill in minority/sect here]" is an end to every 'discussion' and the child who asks "Why do churches have lightning rods?" gets a slap! That's OK is it?

Funny isn't it, how God is on every side in a war. That's everyday wars, not counting holy ones. Those Holy Wars work out really well don't they? Look up that euphemism for atrocity: *Ethnic cleansing.* Look up the euphemism for living in fear and neighbourhood gangsters: Sectarian Zoning with *Peace Walls.* How final was Hitler's 'Final solution'. But hey! Lack of success will never stop a new generation of desperate despots and religious demagogues. 900 years ago we had Christian Crusaders. Now we have Islamic Jihadists. How about No! Stop! and Desist! Not only does history show Holy War to be a vanity project with vicious retaliation, but it's just **WRONG.** Islamic leaders (like all leaders of religions) are stuck by having to be two-faced about condemning Holy War.

2

You shouldn't be hurt by your religion.

Or by leaving it.

Religious groups just love to increase their power over their members by isolating them. They do this in all sorts of ways. This gives rise to lack of mainstream social skills, fear of expressing any feeling or discussing any idea that isn't 'approved'. This leads to internal conflict which can't be resolved and often turns into miserable guilt. Or they become vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. I knew a lovely Catholic chap, about my age, who sought the help of priests rather than doctors and ended up killing himself. It should be criminal for priests to offer 'cures'. Tramline counselling with 'God will look after you' as the only real advice is a fraud. In this case deadly fraud.

How about giving us some money? The social pressure is enormous! Many people defraud their families in one way or another to pay tithes.

Then of course you must marry somebody 'chosen' for you. The choosing might seem natural, say from the pool of other eligibles, and might be very happy... Or not quite what you wanted when you wanted. Arggh! Now the choices are simple: Head-down do all that family stuff or explode the tissue of false dreams. What a shame you didn't have more freedom to explore options when you were younger?

The psychological damage from leaving any 'inclusive family' is extensively documented. Escapees (or rejects or ex-army bods without a close regiment, say) will never be 'back to 100% normal'. That tribe and how it changed them and what it did to them will be an everyday memory. Good things and bad things. Great days and horrible nights. Gushing trust and screaming shame. All still too raw to tell.

Who to tell it to? With trust in 'the family' destroyed, who can be trusted. Who has genuine sympathy and time to listen and force to support without taking advantage?

In some parts of the world, leaving a religion

is a statutory crime. In more civilised parts it's only savage ostracism. It's a natural thing for religions to see that apostasy is punished. I'm pleased to say that in the UK at the moment, in theory, it's fine to believe in anything or nothing.

3

Religious people shouldn't expect respect for believing in fairystories and miracles.

And being led by priests who make things up as convenient.

Religions **DEMAND** respect. If you don't, they try to claim some sort of hate crime. If I say "All Catholics should be burnt at the stake for 'reasons' " then that would be somewhat hateful. (One more savage riposte in a centuries-old war of savage words and savagery.) If I just say all priests, imams, bishops, monks, nuns, and hierophants are fairytale-jockeys, then where's the 'hate' in that. Oh yes, I do wish their toxic entitlement to was wiped from the face of the Earth, but likewise with Malaria and Tetse flies. Good riddance if it was possible. They are just slaves of their religions, and in an ideal world should be rehabilitated into modern society.

"Hello!" to every single religious big-wig: I know you don't like to hear your Holy Writings called fairytales, but quite frankly, anybody with the slightest intellectual integrity would leave you to be slaughtered by the wolves and picked clean by the crows. You don't have a leg to stand on. Legends. L-e-g-e-n-d-s. Some bits might be 'based on historical fact'¹ but even so, what does that make them? One person's history. So God did this and did that and saw that it was good and was sitting beside the barbecue when all of a sudden he saw it was a mighty fine time to do another trick they would all be stunned by...

I think of myself as a teacher and I'm always using writing or hypothetical examples. These are examples and metaphors not a religion. The Word Of Peter Fox is just a certain thought-through statement of opinion. (I'm only a part-time pontiff.)

Why do priests think that 'eating pig meat is bad' has any modern relevance? Why can you only eat baked potatoes (Or whatever your religion specifies) when the moon is full and the wind is in the East? (The answer is, of course, that the priests must control you.) Any observance is a duty that you must obey or be a sinner and then subject to the vicious retribution of the priest/imam/etcetra (who is

only doing God's will). Holy days and intricate rituals must be observed. Why? Not so much written in the Holy Works as evolved to keep the faithful 'on parade'.

So the Pope, bless him, tells all the Catholics in the world that condoms are B*A*D. Which bit of the Bible did he read that in? The secret bit that ordinary people aren't allowed to see? Funnily enough I don't recall any Archbishop of Canterbury standing in a pulpit and calling-out the Pope on this one. This might not be official Catholic dogma in 2020 but the idea leached into South Africa and the idea that it was 'a religious dogma so that was best left alone' caused many thousands to unnecessarily die of STDs.

Each one of us has had the junior school experience of mocking a kid who lived in some make-believe world or didn't quite understand something straight. "I'm going to be a fighter pilot" said the kid with the pebble glasses. "My dad is chairman of the..." "My mum has more tattoos than..." "My dad's friend is the Queen of Sheeba's factotum." All hostages to inquisitive fortune which would eventually undo them. Part of being made into an adult is accepting what people tell you as the truth. The Prime Minister says something so it must be true. No! So it must be important? No you idiot! Now it's your turn to be mocked: "God hates gays. It's God's will that innocent people are murdered because he can't be bothered to phone the police, even though he is all powerful. Perhaps his battery is at 0%."

As we grow up we learn that some people are better friends than others. Also some people earn our respect. As a natural part of growing-up we reject those who demand respect. That's what teenagers do. It's part of being a human to want to reject homely authority. Especially for boys. Girls are much more committed to continuity. A key objective of religions is to control teenage rebellion. Have a look at how they do it. Poor kids.

¹ Historians know that multiple reports, and copies of reports, of the same event can give very different outlook. Translations add their bias. Holy works don't stand a chance of being 'accurate' under these circumstances.

4

Other sects are just as fanatical and bigoted as yours.
So just call it quits, because it annoys the hell out of normal people.

Oh gosh! My religion isn't bigoted and particular about, well, hardly anything? Really? So no schisms? Funny how that Ecumenical stuff wouldn't be needed if there weren't schisms previously.² Three popes at one time?

Religions are about power. Power brings with it corruption, jealousy and opportunities for power struggles or schisms. Those in power are well-entrenched and so reform has to happen by a treacherous breakaway.

Normal people don't give a monkey's for the ridiculous splitting of hairs to justify one view or the other about some silly theological point. But we do care that you can't cope with the way modern society works. Not only, you twits can't say 100% that, for example, 'women will make perfectly acceptable priests and archbishops', but you can't agree amongst yourselves. What wonderful leadership that fudge is. Why won't the

² For a start, count the pages on Wikipedia matching 'Christian denominations established in the 19th century'.

Anglicans (who sort of allow women to be bishops at last) call-out the misogynic Catholics?

The answer is because normal people realise that the heavyweights who are still somehow 'respected' as part of the establishment are going to gather their forces for war. Often of course literally war. Often ethnic cleansing. Often brutal suppression of all independence, justice and opportunity.

In the UK there is still a stranglehold over secular matters in Northern Ireland due to sectarian-based battle-lines. A century of oppression and privilege has been pandered-to by the mainland government. We now have mainland emerging Moslem enclaves where it is easy to feel that religion is more important than social progress. The trouble is that politicians don't dare to challenge the religious vote. So our politics gets the same sectarian treatment! How horrible!

5

Selectively ignoring parts of Holy Scriptures destroys any credibility in the rest.

For example: Exodus 35:2 *For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death.*

There are plenty of other ludicrous statements in the Bible. But a good sneer at the 'holy word of God' and the priest's 'mumble mumble mumble' isn't the end of the story. (Obviously other Holy Works' have their embarrassments anachronisms.)

This highlights that fact that no matter how much religions want to have it both ways, they can't hide the fact that they are incredibly out of date.

If I walk up the High Street threatening to kill

³ I'm not going to be doing it locally. So all you decent Devon bus drivers don't have to worry. Not from me anyway. But I should watch out for bishops and priests... And any 'Christian' nutter. Who can tell?

people who work on Sundays then I'll be arrested. I might try jumping on a bus on a Sunday with a knife and use the biblical defence. How will that work out do you think?

³

If it wasn't for the fact that 'the word of God' is used to justify horrific crime, it would be hilarious to watch in-fighting between factions who each have the 'one true word of God' and at the same time try to distance themselves from their nutter comrades.

6**Priests might claim to selflessly bring comfort but actually it's conditional on believing.**

Fear and guilt. Calamitous consequences of sin. Grovelling repentance. Casting-out are menaces. Strange how it's always the Devil who gets a bad press for buying souls, but it's fine for priests to do the exact same thing.

I'm sure the large majority of religious officials mean well. Firstly, 'means well' is not a proper qualification. Secondly they have an ominous track record of exploiting and persecuting the vulnerable either through institutions or institutionalised silence. Thirdly, their privileged positions allows them repetitive access to proselytise without any opposition. Fourthly, priests put themselves in the position of negotiating on behalf of the Almighty One to reduce eternal suffering - for a fee. Money is part of the deal but so is believing in all the good and especially bad things to happen in the afterlife... With payment up-front!

Strange isn't it how selling your soul to the devil is bad but selling your soul to God in

exchange for less than saintly real life is absolutely fine. Pot say hello to kettle.

One horrific aspect is prolonging death. Time and again the churches have fought against Civilised Dying in Britain. How much better to torture dying people than help them. The Catholics are very insistent that God not you should be in charge. Well, fuck you priests!

There's an interesting dark side to not being allowed into heaven. At the very least, threats of being ostracised by your friends. (Remember that cults cultivate social introversion to the point of helplessness in their congregations. They may have a great time being drones together, but heaven help the free-thinker.)

7**When religions tell normal people what they can and can't do they get very irritated.**

Even worse, when everyone is supposed to respect irrational beliefs and invented dogma. Even worse when normal people are not allowed to interfere with quite obviously damaging practices.

For centuries it has been presumed that the Word Of God as translated by his priests is beyond criticism. This attitude is still cultivated today. How about no. How about you're all barmy believers in fairy tales who make up what you fancy and cover-up what you can.

The classic example of this is Civilised Dying. The Church of England has fought against it in Parliament. The Catholic Church believes God owns your soul not you. Eh? Justifying suffering because, according to them 'that's what God wants'. But hey, don't take it too seriously... Cruelty is part of the great religious tradition, so get used to it!

Want to be gay? Want a civil divorce? Want to marry somebody who doesn't have your religion? Want to marry somebody in a cult? Whoa there!

When priests are found out, their mates close ranks to cover-up the crime and protect the perpetrator. It happens at all levels. ⁴

The established church demands taxes. As recently as 1930 the Anglican Church was evicting farmers who were already bankrupt for not paying tithes. ⁵ They get special privileges such as being able to dodge planning laws.

But of course, apart from interfering in the way normal people live their lives the Established Churches must get their hands on Government schools. What if, in England, you don't want your child indoctrinated with religion at a state primary school? Sorry, you're out of luck. In the UK the Boy Scouts (Girl Guides) are definitely God-squad with fudges for weirdos.

⁴ Justin Welby gave a 'personal apology' in May 2021, claiming he didn't know about what went on 40 years ago and was formally reported but kept secret. Since he was a good mate of chief perpetrator John Smyth that's difficult to believe. Richard Scorer, head of abuse law at Slater and Gordon, who acted for Smyth's victims in their claims against the Titus Trust, said: "*Justin Welby's apology is welcome but he still needs to give a full account of his involvement in this particular C of E subculture, what he knew of high-profile abusers such as John Smyth and when he knew it, and what action he took in response.*"

⁵ See Queen Anne's Bounty. Or contemporary *The Tithe War* by Doreen Wallace.

8

Tradition is no excuse for repugnant behaviour such as misogyny and dogmatic persecution.

Hiding behind 'culture' is cowardly and false and unacceptably out of date.

Tribalism is for, er, tribes. It has no place in modern society. Has anyone noticed the irony of immigrant communities screaming that they're being picked-on while at the same time trying to do everything to entrench that difference between them and native communities? They want to have our own rules (Sharia-law is just one example) and have no tolerance for 'interference' with their religiously-led society.

So we get instant recourse to claims of racism and 'disrespecting culture' when law enforcement, child protection, employment protection, education opportunities, social education, mixed cultures with horizons beyond narrow religious dogma are introduced. Make your minds up: Religion-based ghetto or integration? Such communities shouldn't exist. They serve to trap people who would otherwise integrate. They exist because religious hegemony drowns opportunity.

Of course religion, seeing itself as being

infinitely more important than individuals, demands a policy of God-first and ordinary people last. If you even date somebody not of your religion then that's serious punishment. Why? Oh yes: For all the reasons above. Sorry you're a woman but your legal testimony is worth half a man's.

For normal people who watch the comedic struggles between factions inside religions as they try to square the circle of hundreds of years of dogma with modern society, the train-wreck is a farce of ever more knotted compromises, avoidances and hypocrisy. Somebody ask the Pope if women are equal to men... And then, why they're not equal enough to be priests. Comedy gold!

Except that religions have billions caught in their nets. Us normals are only affected on the fringes (as above) but what about those still in the cult? It's good to hold religions up to ridicule, but important to respect those trapped inside. Held hostage by the usual cult methods.

9

The majority of people are perfectly capable of behaving decently without religious guidance.

Also they can be better trusted to deal impartially with those who religions have prejudices against. Furthermore they are less likely to be trapped by hypocrisy caused by clash of religious teaching and real life. Furthermore vulnerable people are less likely to be recruited into a cult.

There is no definition of 'decent behaviour' and boundaries are always changing. How about not stealing things? Do I not steal things because 'God might see me doing it' or because I'm a normal person who doesn't do that sort of thing. Where in the Bible does it say 'Thou shall not drive at more than 30 miles per hour in a town whether ye observe the speed limit signs or not'? Does God give you penalty points for coveting your neighbour's ox? 100 penalty points and you go to Hell? Or save up for a harp by smiling at strangers and taking your old copies of *Bat Watcher Monthly* to the charity shop?

It's possible that a few people might be deterred from crime by the religious conviction they will go to hell as a result.

There's a huge difference between what the Church sees as crime and what society considers even vaguely criminal. Marry somebody outside your faith is immediate disaster. Not give a tenth of your earnings (as decided by the church officials) to the church

and that's a grilling up before 'da boss'. The fact that you want to feed your children or pay for the cat to get proper medical care in its last weeks counts for absolutely nothing. The Church runs on RULES and don't you forget it.

What about strongly religious people in civil office? There are recent headline cases of state employees refusing to do their jobs on religious grounds. Well, I for one, say the civil law trounces the feelings of fairy-tale-believers every time. Would I be allowed to stop somebody with ginger hair getting a driver's licence 'because the pixies told me so'? Would anybody think that for a moment? No of course not. So why any 'debate' about 'Christian beliefs'? (The more 'deeply held' the more the individual is brainwashed and needs help.)

Then we have religious councillors, group leaders, camps and study groups. And the purpose of the groups is?... Lots of fresh air and isolation. Decency, manliness and

communal showers. (The current Archbishop of Canterbury knows a lot more about the abuse that went on at these sorts of things than he lets on.) While not everyone is 'abused' as we'd call it, they are all assumed to be of the same maturity and encouraged to be less an inhibited individual and more a spiritual explorer. Fun times for uncertain teenagers. (Getting kids out of the ghetto is a really good thing. Smothering that new world with a blanket of religious tripe isn't.)

Religions always offer counselling. Naturally the dogmatic trounces the pragmatic and the needs of the religion trounces the needs of the individual. "Yes now would be a good time to repent your sins and give a sum in your will to the Church." is a mild form of the abuse that goes on. Some sects actively oppose modern medical intervention! The Jehovah's Witnesses deny blood transfusions. What! Your choice⁶: Live outside of your cult or die and go to that glorious heaven as told in the books of fairytales. It's bizarre and tragically-comical to us normals but literally life and death to actual people every day. Oh no you can't study for that - It's not a proper subject for women. Religions do not care about the practical needs or aspirations of individuals. If it's not in **the book** then that's a NO. It's worth pointing out too that many religions are

⁶ Sorry. **Not** your choice if you're a child.

very male-biassed, so answers like 'put up with it and get used to being beaten by your husband' are not uncommon. Never, ever, has religious advice involved broadening of horizons and looking around for alternatives.

Ostensibly non-religious counselling is often contracted to religion-based (sometimes covertly) organisations. Whoever thought that was a good idea? Suppose you want an abortion; so who do you talk to? There's plenty of advice but a lot comes from wells poisoned by religious dogma or even fanaticism. How religiously-neutral are doctors and nurses in practice?

It is quite reasonable for wise people who have seen lots of situations, and explored more, to have certain personal preferences. Their wisdom may be based on fact or wishful thinking. Is Fred to be recommended as a plumber because (a) he's good (b) he's a good Jewish Boy or (c) he's my relative. This comes down to integrity and trust. We've already seen how integrity is nullified by religion. Trust though can be magnified by being a respected religious figure in your religion. What good catholic wouldn't trust their priest? Do you see where this is leading? Integrity doesn't matter to a councillor so long as they can rely on their assumed trust that comes from being 'official'.

10

Religions should be honest about the money they collect.

Some seem to spend an awful lot on very fancy buildings, limousines and private jets.

There's one born every minute. Send money to some preacher on the TV, a self-appointed 'reverend' with millions of personal wealth. How stupid do you have to be? That's how all churches work if they can't extort then they'll wheedle.

Of course the money collected goes to the

ruling elite of the religion. They decide what to do with it. Fancy gold candlesticks or soup kitchens? Oh but the temptation to divert funds for obvious causes to side-projects soon takes over. Too technical, and the congregation wouldn't understand. While repairing the roof we might sneak-in a bronze cupola to mark 25 years of Fred's mission.