

20 REASONS TO ABANDON CHRISTIANITY



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to Abandon Christianity**

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Contents

1. Christianity is based on fear	1
2. Christianity preys on the innocent	2
3. Christianity is based on dishonesty	3
4. Christianity is extremely egocentric	3
5. Christianity breeds arrogance	5
6. Christianity breeds authoritarianism	5
7. Christianity is cruel	7
8. Christianity is anti-intellectual, anti-scientific	9
9. Christianity is morbidly preoccupied with sex	12
10. Christianity produces sexual misery	13
11. Christianity has a narrow view of morality	15
12. Christianity focuses on imaginary evils	15
13. Christianity devalues the natural world	16
14. Christianity models hierarchical organization	16
15. Christianity sanctions slavery	17
16. Christianity is misogynistic	18
17. Christianity is homophobic	20
18. The Bible is not a reliable guide to Christ	22
19. The Bible is riddled with contradictions	22
20. Christianity borrowed its central myths	23

20 Reasons to Abandon Christianity

This e-book briefly looks at many of the reasons that Christianity is undesirable from both a personal and a social point of view. All of the matters discussed here have been dealt with elsewhere at greater length, but that's beside the point: the purpose of *20 Reasons to Abandon Christianity* is to list the most outstanding misery-producing and socially destructive qualities of Christianity in one place. When considered *in toto*, they lead to an irresistible conclusion: that Christianity must be abandoned, for the sake of both personal happiness and social progress.

As regards the title, “abandon”—rather than “suppress” or “eliminate”—was chosen deliberately. Attempts to coercively suppress beliefs are not only ethically wrong, but in the long run they are often ineffective—as the resurgence of religion in the former Soviet Union demonstrates. If Christianity is ever to disappear, it will be because individual human beings wake up, abandon their destructive, repressive beliefs, and choose to be here now, in the only life we have.

1. Christianity is based on fear. While today there are liberal clergy who preach a gospel of love, they ignore the bulk of Christian teachings, not to mention the bulk of Christian history. Throughout almost its entire time on Earth, the motor driving Christianity has been—in addition to the fear of death—fear of the devil and fear of hell. One can only imagine how potent these threats seemed prior to the rise of science and rational thinking, which have largely robbed these bogeys of their power to inspire terror. But even today, the existence of the devil and hell are cardinal doctrinal tenets of almost all Christian creeds, and many fundamentalist preachers still openly resort to terrorizing their followers with lurid, sadistic por-

traits of the suffering of nonbelievers after death. This is not an attempt to convince through logic and reason; it is not an attempt to appeal to the better nature of individuals; rather, it is an attempt to whip the flock into line through threats, through appeals to a base part of human nature—fear and cowardice.

2. Christianity preys on the innocent. If Christian fear-mongering were directed solely at adults, it would be bad enough, but Christians routinely terrorize helpless children through grisly depictions of the endless horrors and suffering they'll be subjected to if they don't live obedient Christian lives. Christianity has darkened the early years of generation after generation of children, who have lived in terror of dying while in mortal sin and going to endless torment as a result. All of these children were trusting of adults, and they did not have the ability to analyze what they were being told; they were simply helpless victims, who, ironically, victimized following generations in the same manner that they themselves had been victimized. The nearly 2000 years of Christian terrorizing of children ranks as one of its greatest crimes. And it's one that continues to this day.

As an example of Christianity's cruel brainwashing of the innocent, consider this quotation from an officially approved, 19th-century Catholic *children's* book, *Tracts for Spiritual Reading*, by Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R.:

Look into this little prison. In the middle of it there is a boy, a young man. He is silent; despair is on him . . . His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth and breath of blazing fire rolls out of it. But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No; then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalding veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones. Ask him why he is thus tormented. His answer is that when he was alive, his blood boiled to do very wicked things.

There are many similar passages in this book. Commenting on it, William Meagher, Vicar-General of Dublin, states in his *Approbation*:

I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatever in it contrary to the doctrines of the Holy Faith; but on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify the youthful classes for whose benefit it has been written.

3. Christianity is based on dishonesty. The Christian appeal to fear, to cowardice, is an admission that the evidence supporting Christian beliefs is far from compelling. If the evidence were such that Christianity's truth was immediately apparent to anyone who considered it, Christians—including those who wrote the Gospels—would feel no need to resort to the cheap tactic of using threats to inspire “belief” (more accurately, “lip service”). That the Christian clergy have been more than willing to accept such lip service (plus the money and obedience that go with it) in place of genuine belief, is an additional indictment of the basic dishonesty of Christianity.

How deep dishonesty runs in Christianity can be gauged by one of the most popular Christian arguments for belief in God: Pascal's wager. This “wager” holds that it's safer to “believe” in God (as if belief were *volitional!*) than not to believe, because God might exist, and if it does, it will save “believers” and condemn nonbelievers to hell after death. This is an appeal to pure cowardice. It has absolutely nothing to do with the search for truth. Instead, it's an appeal to abandon honesty and intellectual integrity, and to pretend that lip service is the same thing as belief. If the patriarchal God of Christianity really exists, one wonders how it would judge the cowards and hypocrites who advance and bow to this particularly craven “wager.”

4. Christianity is extremely egocentric. The deep egocentrism of Christianity is intimately tied to its reliance on fear. In addition to the fears of the devil and hell, Christianity plays on another of humankind's most basic fears: death, the dissolution of the individual ego. Perhaps Christianity's strongest appeal is its promise of eternal life. While there is absolutely no evidence to support this claim, most people are so terrified of death that they cling to this treachery promise insisting, like frightened children, that it must be true. Nietzsche put the matter well: “*salvation of the soul*—in plain

words, the world revolves around *me*.” It’s difficult to see anything spiritual in this desperate grasping at straws, this desperate grasping at the illusion of personal immortality.

Another manifestation of the extreme egotism of Christianity is the belief that God is intimately concerned with picayune aspects of, and directly intervenes in, the lives of individuals. If God, the creator and controller of the universe, is vitally concerned with your sex life, you must be pretty damned important. Many Christians take this particular form of egotism much further and actually imagine that God has a plan for them, or that God directly talks to, directs, or even does favors for them.¹ If one ignored the frequent and glaring contradictions in this supposed divine guidance, and the dead bodies sometimes left in its wake, one could almost believe that the individuals making such claims are guided by God. But one can’t ignore the contradictions in and the oftentimes horrible results of following such “divine guidance.” As “Agent Mulder” put it (perhaps paraphrasing Thomas Szasz) in a 1998 X-Files episode, “When you talk to God it’s prayer, but when God talks to you it’s schizophrenia. . . . God may have his reasons, but he sure seems to employ a lot of psychotics to carry out his job orders.”

In less extreme cases, the insistence that one is receiving divine guidance or special treatment from God is usually the attempt of those who feel worthless—or helpless, adrift in an uncaring world—to feel important or cared for. This less sinister form of egotism is commonly found in the expressions of disaster survivors that “God must have had a reason for saving me” (in contrast to their less-worthy-of-life fellow disaster victims, whom God—who controls all things—killed). Again, it’s very difficult to see anything spiritual in such egocentricity.

1. A friend who read the first draft of this essay notes: “My moronic sister-in-law once told me that God found her parking spots near the front door at Wal-mart! Years later, when she developed a brain tumor, I concluded that God must have gotten tired of finding parking places for her and gave her the tumor so that she could get handicapped plates.” As Nietzsche put it in *The Anti-Christ*: “That little hypocrites and half-crazed people dare to imagine that on their account the laws of nature are constantly broken—such an enhancement of every kind of selfishness to infinity, to impudence, cannot be branded with sufficient contempt. And yet Christianity owes its triumph to this pitiable flattery of personal vanity.”