

License

A piece of typst code which documents some criticisms of creationisms via literature review.

Copyright © 2023

This program is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or (at your option) any later version.

This program is distributed in the hope that it will be useful, but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the GNU General Public License for more details.

You should have received a copy of the GNU General Public License along with this program. If not, see <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.

Introduction

Had a conversation with a facebook friend who came onto my post. I'm writing this down here, because there are some legitimate issues that need to be addressed. However, it shouldn't be on facebook.

The post I posted read like so "Many people reject Jesus because of bad experiences with religious people.

But. Here's the thing... Jesus had bad experiences with religious people, too.

In fact, they killed him. People will let you down. Jesus won't."

Recording of comments was done as of 09 august 2023

Comment 1

"My deconversion from Christianity was complex and complicated and isn't just because of bad experiences with religious people or groups. Reading the Bible for myself helped me question it and my faith and see why some people have problems with believing it. I can't believe that it's the inspired word of God anymore. There are other reasons too. Jesus had some bad views and teachings besides good ones, and he was just a man. There's also no evidence for Christianity being the one true religion or for its extraordinary claims like the resurrection. If Christianity were true, why so many divisions over interpretation and theology? "

Right I wasn't quite prepared for this. But there are a few important issues brought up here.

1. Personal bad experiences with religious people and groups
2. Other reasons for not believing the bible is the word of God (vague)
3. Jesus has bad views and teachings besides good ones (need clarity)
4. Jesus was just a man (claim, need clarity)
5. No evidence for Christianity being the one true religion (clarity?)
6. miraculous extraordinary claims have no backing

And now the question, "why so many divisions?" ie denominations

Obviously each matter has many different aspects. How much time can I spare?

One thing is obvious to me though, having experienced a physical healing miracle first hand in real-time, I don't think the miraculous is as out-of-reach for people any more. This part is perhaps the easiest.

I thought and prayed at least about the last part, and had a response ready. However, I wasn't sure how well received it was going to be. I wasn't generally interested in debates.

My response

“ Ah, hi... wasn't quite expecting this Well, I've glanced upon some of what you've written before, and as far as I hear, you've been through a lot. It's fair to say there are many layers to your question besides the obvious. So let me ask you first, what are you looking for by asking this question? Are you out for information and perspectives? Are you seeking to persuade me and other people about your beliefs? Or do you just want to be heard? Is it a combination of these or something I haven't quite listed? If you let me know, then it will help me formulate a response (if you want to be responded to) “

Comment 2

“It's to show why I'm no longer a Christian and to help Christians to think for themselves about their beliefs and about why some people leave the religion. It's also to help non-Christians see why some people don't accept the Christian religion.”

Okay sure, so it seems any intellectual response I give is not going to be well received. This means long periods of debate and arguing. I scarcely have time for that. Also, no point spending effort to give answers if someone doesn't want to listen to them.

Well, I chose to respond. To an extent, it feels a little bit rude to me, that one would come up commenting to me to teach me how to think.

My Response

“ okay, first observation: it seems you are more interested in heard more than you are in hearing people out. In that case i will not answer the question you asked.

Second observation: you said you want to help people think for themselves. When you say you want to help people think for themselves, it is as if you posture yourself as the superior person teaching someone intellectually inferior how to think. And it sounds to me as if you are going around attempting to proselytise people with your comments. It is this very kind of behaviour that many non christians find irritating when christians do it, carrying a “holier than thou” attitude, I am aware that this is why many leave the church. And yet here you are making comments on my post and being pushy with your belief systems. Remind me if i have forgotten, have I personally done this to you? Did I shove my belief systems into your face the way you have just done by commenting in this manner as you have on my post? What wrong have I done to you that I need to rectify? “

Comment 3

Part A: I responded to this bit (1207 hrs 24 July)

“ I see. You kinda sound arrogant here. The reason why I wanted people to think about why they believe is because some Christians proselytized to me when I left Christianity and I felt overwhelmed when they talked to me in person. Some didn't let me speak about why I don't believe anymore. I'm not proselytizing to people, but trying to educate them. Most Christians and other religious people can't think for themselves when they encounter other religious beliefs or even non-religious beliefs and ideas. I'm not the one who's pushy about my lack of beliefs or shoving them

down other people's throats like many Christians and followers of other missionary religions like Islam are when they encounter formerly religious people or those who never believed in their respective religions. Also, Christians and Muslims have a lot a privileges wherever they're the majority. Christian privilege is huge in the US, and yet they cry out "persecution" when they face boundaries being set on them or their ability to persecute and discriminate against others is being eroded. You didn't try to pressure me into believing again, but some other Christians did. Unfortunately, you misunderstood me, like many other Christians have when I told my reasons why I left Christianity.

Ask yourself: Why do so many former Christians experience manipulation or shunning from Christian peers, or even discrimination? Why is it that conservative Christians and Christian fundamentalists want to force LGBTQ people into suicide or back into the closet? Why do they want to force women and girls to be submissive to men and boys?

Most Christians and other religious people are indoctrinated during childhood and adolescence into their religions and can't think critically when they encounter other beliefs or lack of beliefs. I was like that myself when I was a believer in Jesus. The post itself misunderstands why people leave Christianity and doesn't acknowledge that the Bible is full of inaccuracies, contradictions, and other inconsistencies. "

Part B: He added this later at 24 July at 13:55, I didn't see nor respond

" Plus it doesn't acknowledge that Christianity has the sources of religious trauma for many former Christians and those deconstructing or deconverting from Christianity.

The fact that you don't want to hear my perspective shows me that you're not different from other Christians like the cult members who I spoke to in 2020 through Zoom and text. Many religious people won't listen to formerly religious people or non-religious people when they proselytize to them but the ones that they proselytize to are telling them why they don't believe. I don't see myself as superior to others. "

My Response

" Look man, if you want to believe what you want to, I have no intent to change your mind. I am totally okay if you want to express yourself. My issue is not with that. You are totally free to express your thoughts on your own facebook page. And you are by all means free not to believe in Christianity.

Here's where my issue is, you say that other Christians overwhelm you when the proselytise you. I get it, and I don't support them overwhelming you. You didn't invite them to come and overwhelm you, and yet they did. But you have come to my page where I didn't invite you either, and you started overwhelming me with questions, each requires its own nuanced and detailed discussion that you could write several books on them. And you have done so more with your last post, and packaged US politics into the discussion, which I have no interest in doing talking about. The United States is not my country of origin and I do not have the time nor desire to delve into its political intricacies as of this time. In the culture I come from, it's considered pushy if you come up all of a sudden uninvited and ask someone to justify their views religion and politics. How do you not expect me to perceive you as pushy and disrespectful even though you are not as pushy like some other missionaries?

Look, I want you to have your own views, and I want you to think for yourself, same as you do. Facebook is a bad place to discuss these sensitive topics and it is easy to misunderstand each other. As much as I have misunderstood you, I will also say you misunderstand me. You want not to be overwhelmed, so do I. And as it is, you are overwhelming me. You're coming up wanting to share

your experiences and learning journey, and you are expecting me to understand you from facebook text of all things. I have experiences and a journey of my own, and yet you made no attempt to understand my experiences or journey, and then you expect me to understand yours when you come knocking the door all of a sudden. Moreover your comments come across as “i know better than you” even though you may not consciously mean it like that. I am not inclined to answer questions posed in such a manner. In the same manner, I don’t expect you to answer me and try to be understanding toward me if I were to do the same to you, overwhelming you with questions out of the blue. And that’s why, as you said, I made no attempt to pressure you, and I have no desire to overwhelm you either. I wish you peace and want to call it quits. Be well. “

Issues here

If one were to filter out the vitriol, here are the important points

1. Most religious people can’t think for themselves, indoctrination
2. Stifled discussion when he wanted to bring up his views
3. Majority Religious Privilege
4. Experiences of manipulation
5. LGBTQ issues, forced into suicide or back into the closet
6. forcing women and girls to be submissive to men and boys
7. bible is full of inaccuracies, contradictions and inconsistencies

Now again, this is about six additional issues within the span of twelve posts. It’s not really giving me any chance to answer. Can answer those later.

Comment 4

“Ok. Sorry that we misunderstood each other. I wasn’t fully honest with myself when I began to show reasons why I left Christianity twice. I would have been open to hearing you tell me why you believe. What I mentioned that’s political isn’t limited to the US, but is also happening in some Latin American countries and in the Philippines, and even in Uganda and in some Eastern European countries.

You did comment on one of my posts without me inviting you to comment on my posts about Bible inconsistencies. But at that time, I didn’t make a post that everyone can see about all the reasons why I’m an agnostic atheist. I don’t know how well atheists and other nonreligious people are treated in Singapore, especially if they used to be Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc. My religious traumas were triggered when I responded to your post. The picture that you shared was what triggered my religious traumas. In some parts of the US, atheists and other nonreligious people are still discriminated. I hope that in the future we can understand each other, especially about why you believe and why I don’t believe, even though we don’t convert, revert, or deconvert. I don’t want to pressure any religious person to deconvert from their religious beliefs.”

My Response

“Hey man, no hard feelings, and if I triggered your trauma in this present post. I am sorry this that happened and re-triggered your trauma. I did not intend to and I wasn’t even intending the post for you. Also fair statement on me commenting on your post previously. Apologies if that incident triggered your trauma as well. I’ll try not to comment unless you want me to in future.

If it helps you, and I mean no malice, feel free to block any of my posts that may trigger your trauma. I don’t want you to relive your negative experiences and I do wish you well. I do hope you can recover and become free of your religious trauma.

I appreciate your last statement and I don't want to pressure you as well. I hope there are no enmities now. Also, I have much on my hands at the moment with regards to finishing my studies, so I cannot really comment too much about these heavy topics.

Do take care. See you when I see you."

Issues brought up

J. Alvarez mentioned that I commented on his post uninvited when he talked about biblical inconsistencies. Now, I looked up the post, the original post on 11 July 2022:

"Incoherencias bíblicas No. 1: Contradicciones acerca de la salvación, la justificación, la obediencia, observación de la ley judía, las obras y la fe (hay más pasajes en el Nuevo Testamento sobre estos temas, los cuales se contradicen uno a otro y los siguientes pasajes cuando se relacionen con la salvación y la justificación). Sólo están listados los libros y capítulos con los pasajes resumados -

Gálatas 2 - Justificación por la fe aparte de las obras de la Ley Efesios 2 - Salvados por gracia por medio de la fe en Cristo, y no por las obras Gálatas 4 - Volviendo a la Ley resulta en la esclavitud a la Ley Gálatas 5 - Sirviéndose y amándose entre ellos mismos y evitando "obras de la carne" (implicando obras y obediencia) Efesios 4 hasta 6 - Obediencia y obras Hebreos 11 - Fe ciega que resulta en obras y obediencia Filipenses 2 - Trabajando en la obra de la salvación con miedo y temor, sin cuestionar nada ni quejarse Filipenses 3 - Evitando el legalismo Juan 14 - Manteniendo los mandamientos de Jesús Romanos 10 - Llamando el nombre del Señor resultará en la salvación Mateo 7 - Sólo los que hacen la voluntad de Dios se salvarán y muchos que dicen 'Señor...' serán condenados. Así que no todos que llaman el nombre del Señor se salvarán Santiago 2 - Justificados por las obras y no sólo la fe Mateo 19 - Manteniendo los mandamientos (eso quiere decir toda la ley judía y cualesquiera que Jesús dijo a sus seguidores que obedecieran) Romanos 9 - Predestinación, a pesar de la justificación por la fe Efesios 1 - Predestinación Romanos 2 - Justificados por las obras Apocalipsis 20 - Los muertos están juzgados conforme a sus obras Lucas 23 - Personas moribundas que se arrepienten y aceptan a Jesús pueden salvarse antes de la muerte"

Translation:

"Biblical inconsistencies 1: Contradictions about salvation, justification, obedience, observation of Jewish law, works and faith (there are more passages in the New Testament about these topics, which contradict each other and the following passages when they relate to salvation and the justification). Only the books and chapters with the passages summarized are listed -

Galatians 2 - Justification by faith apart from the works of the law Ephesians 2 - Saved by grace through faith in Christ, and not by works Galatians 4 - Returning to the law results in slavery to the law Galatians 5 - Serving and loving one another and avoiding "works of the flesh" (involving works and obedience) Ephesians 4:6 - Obedience and works Hebrews 11 - Blind faith that results in works and obedience Philippians 2 - Working toward the work of salvation with fear and fear, without questioning anything or complaining Philippians 3 - Avoiding Legalism John 14 - keeping the commandments of Jesus Romans 10 - Calling on the name of the Lord results in salvation Matthew 7 - Only those who do the will of God will be saved and many who say 'Lord..' ' they will be condemned. So not everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved James 2 - Justified by works and not by faith alone Matthew 19 - Keeping the Commandments (that means all Jewish law and whichever Jesus told his followers to obey) Romans 9 - Predestination, despite the justification by faith Ephesians 1 - Predestination Romans 2 - Justified by Works Revelation 20 - The dead are judged according to their works Luke 23 - Dying people who repent and accept Jesus can be saved before death"

He commented in a discussion on his post: “ Thanks. I already watched American Gospel. It’s a nice documentary about what Reformed preachers and churches teach. I was still confused and don’t really know what it means to have faith in Christ, but I never believed in the “once saved always saved” doctrine.

The most negative impact on my faith after 2019 came from my experiences with four different destructive cults or high-control groups , especially Shincheonji and the International Christian Church, because the members their were teaching me that I must do works and obey to be saved and could see that their campus ministries were not healthy when they tried to silence me or accused me of wanting to fight them when I wanted to have a peaceful discussion. They confused me on salvation, but I quickly left the ICC ministry known as DREAM when I got to the part where they said I must disciple someone to become a Christian, and I wish I could leave the Shincheonji ministry known at the time I was in it as NorCal Missions when I heard the instructor saying that one must know and understand the parables to receive salvation. I didn’t pay much attention to what they taught until a few months later, but I’m glad that I eventually left the group. I definitely experienced manipulation, isolation attempts, and willful dishonesty in DREAM and NorCal Missions, and came to realize that the NorCal Missions recruiter who first invited me to her group wasn’t really my friend. “

To which I responded:

“im so sorry that happened to you

Even as i read your account, i feel my blood boiling inside me when i read about what these people did to you.

Yes, run far far away from them."

Umm... I was trying to be supportive and empathetic? Not idea pushing? Excuse me? How is this supposed to be pushy compared to what was posted on my facebook post?

I don’t quite understand why this is being used as an example of me being rude and pushy, when I commented. I did not even touch on biblical inconsistency in my post, did I? Nevermind, I decided to apologise first rather than settling this score, and I won’t bring it up again, intent is to build bridges, not walls.

Now the biblical inconsistency part is relatively easier to handle. But it’s also a common point of confusion.

Now, onto other issues

1. Personal Religious Trauma experiences
2. Religious Majority Privilege

Comment 5 (end of conversation)

“It’s ok. Thanks. We don’t have to discuss about religion and spirituality. I hope you’re doing well. Good luck with your studies!”

Addressing Some Comments

Here’s a list of some of the concerns J. Alvarez raised. Now, I’d be a little more willing to listen if he came to share his experiences and perspectives rather than “educate” people, the word itself does carry the connotation that “I’m the teacher, you’re the student”, at least that’s how I read it. Maybe I misunderstood.

The list is as follows:

1. Personal bad experiences with religious people and groups (x2)
2. Other reasons for not believing the bible is the word of God (vague)
3. Jesus has bad views and teachings besides good ones (need clarity)
4. Jesus was just a man (claim, need clarity)
5. No evidence for Christianity being the one true religion (clarity?)
6. miraculous extraordinary claims have no backing
7. Most religious people can't think for themselves, indoctrination
8. Stifled discussion when he wanted to bring up his views
9. Majority Religious Privilege (x2)
10. Experiences of manipulation
11. LGBTQ issues, forced into suicide or back into the closet
12. forcing women and girls to be submissive to men and boys
13. bible is full of inaccuracies, contradictions and inconsistencies
14. Schisms (multiple denominations)

On the Miraculous (point 6)

Okay, there's countless literature on the incredulity of a group of eleven men stealing the body or some other explanation, and then being allowed to spread religion WITHOUT miraculous signs and wonders. This is especially when they were up against the religious and cultural elitist group of the Pharisees. And they were up against the military might of the Roman Empire.

Even if they were completely convinced and psychologically delusional to the point of death, this does not explain how the Romans were not able to quench this "uprising" as they have done so with many similar ones before.

Of course, I'm biased because I experienced my own personal physical healing miracle and have seen the effects of prayer with my own eyes. But I think it's okay to have one's views shifted because of evidence because it's experienced first hand.

Bad Experiences (point 1) Manipulation (point 10)

Need more elaboration. I've seen abuse of authority, and it is heavily condemned in scripture. However, I may not be addressing what he's asking.

Claims of Jesus having Bad Views and Teachings (point 3)

Hmm... I'll need more insight on why he claims Jesus to be bad.

Claims of Jesus being just a man (point 4)

Well, this point of contention existed from day zero. Plenty of literature has been written, I'm not going to really add onto it.

No evidence for being one true religion (point 5)

Need more clarity. That's a very vague point and claim. Need a thesis, book or essay reference.

GroupThink and Indoctrination (point 7)

Unfortunately, I kind of agree with this. It's not a new point I wasn't aware of before. I really detest this when people are not allowed to ask questions and build trust. Two way conversation is the basic building block of relationships. And you can't love your neighbour, and by extension, fulfil the great commission if you can't even learn to listen properly.

Stifled discussion (point 8)

See point 7. The counter point is that it also depends on the tone of the conversation. Often times, the crux of communication is not just the verbal bits, but non verbal vits. While legitimate points may be raised, the manner in which they are raised will greatly affect the way the conversation goes.

I'll be willing to discuss points, but I perceived the tone as rude, inconsiderate and condescending, therefore I didn't want to respond.

Majority Religious Privilege (point 9)

TBD

LGBTQ issues (point 11)

TBD

Women's Rights (point 12)

TBD

Biblical Inaccuracy (point 13)

The claim here is one of self contradiction and inaccuracy. I will need more insight to grasp this a little better.

Schisms, multiple denominations and sects (point 14)

"If Christianity were true, why so many divisions over interpretation and theology? "

Here's my question in response:

"If the sun is absolutely and truly hot, why do some people on earth freeze to death and some people die of heat injury? And why do some people experience good crop yields and warmth from that very same sun?"