

Can't Hear the Good News with All This Screaming

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 12 September 2012 18:50 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 September 2012 18:59

The count of breathtakingly insane religions, cults, and allied wackos on the scene on any given day is limited only by your ability to use higher numbers. Members always profess goodness and light, then commit dark and damaging acts. The claims are high-minded, the deeds are low down.

Religion is an ancient subject and it gets older all the time. *Very old.*

Sample just one nutball, a so-called pastor, by name of Terry Jones -- yes, the same one who burned Korans last year, instigating days of intensive rioting in Afghanistan. This year, he's out to best his record, and has succeeded: He backed a film providing insults aplenty for Muslims, who say it defames Islam and its holiest figure, Mohammad.

Once again, rioting and death follow this pastor's so-called good works.

In another sampling, this time a cluster of nuts: Westboro Baptist Church, a de facto and tracked hate group of one pastor and about 40 members who routinely hijack media time by acting on their religion of public display of sick hatefulness. You know them from protests at military funerals, threatened pickets at memorial vigils for Aurora shooting victims, and so on.

It took an act of Congress -- as both the expression and the laws themselves go -- to keep their brand of religious sickness back from military funerals, after the bizarrely pious SCOTUS bench gave them an earlier pass and thumbs-up.

The Westboro asylum was also responsible for a tweet that went out minutes after people had been shot at a Sikh temple, "God Sent Another Shooter." (It should be noted in passing that a number of religious insanities were on display there: The shooter likely confused the Sikhs as Muslims, his intended targets.)

From small groups to large, the sickness spreads -- Trinity Broadcasting Network leaps to mind, as they waddle, wade, and wobble through their mega-blowout scandals. There are scads of

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dishonored and disgraced faux holy rollers, caught with hookers of either sex, lured into luxurious lifestyles by their desires, clutching riches beyond measure -- and sins far, far worse. So many fallen: *Calling Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Paul Crouch, Ted Haggard...*

Then, tears of contrition flow like mighty rivers, forgiveness is unsheathed, a great welcoming back into the pack of pack rats becomes fact -- then the show starts all over again.

Where does it all stop? Nowhere, of course -- there is too much money to be made, hand over fist, much better than the free-money take at casinos: After all, there's no payouts.

The game of Religion is an old one, played for a couple thousand years now, that we know of. You'd think we would have had our fill by now. But there's something about the mind-control game brought on by our superstitious fears of death and our need for reassuring ritual and offsetting magic.

There is usually a Big Book of Rules, no matter the religion. It is used as a club for unbelievers, but is otherwise ignored by believers. *And, lo: Nations rise and fall underfoot, while trespass and forgiveness are played like perpetual ping pong.*

Madness. Any good works that are actually accomplished could have been even more easily done under humanitarian and charitable auspices, without dragging deities in and out of the Big Top by their ankles, willy-nilly.

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The odds are against humans being alone in the universe. Know why we haven't met the others yet? War's one reason, religion's the other. We couldn't handle the truth. It would threaten and collapse all our world views and life constructs. There would be a massive freak out, cave-in, meltdown, and crack-up.

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When missionaries and Jehovah's Witnesses stop by, interrupting my sleep or life, I ask them for their names and addresses first, before the palaver commences and their saliva flows. I explain I will need this information so I can come by later, with some of my friends, and interrupt *their* sleep and *their* lives, asking them: "*Have you heard the good news?*"

I calmly explain the *good news* is that we're on our own in this life, folks. It all boils down to what you choose to do or choose not to do. That's all there is, so you'd better make the most of it, and use your time wisely. *Starting right now.*

You should see the looks I get as they hurriedly depart. *Ahh, peace.*

* * * * *

You want to pray -- go for it, help yourselves. No one will stop you, not ever. But keep that stuff under cover, as no one needs or wants to know about your habits and preferences, just as you have no interest in knowing -- as it's been indelicately phrased -- which of us *folds* and who *scrunches*.

(*Christians: □ See Matthew 6:6.*)

Religionists: A shocking news flash, now -- we are not in this world for your pleasure, to do your bidding, or to live by your standards. Live and let live, each to his and her own. You may have heard of this before -- it's an old concept. It's in your Book. Today, this old and simple truth maintains everyone's truths, rights, abilities to live, and grants everyone equal respect.

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More examples? The 10 Commandments went up in the Georgia state capitol. A Rhode Island girl got weeks of death threats from Christians because she thought better of a prayer banner put up in a public school. A state representative even called her "an evil little thing."

Pretexts of one sort and another are tried and re-tried in endlessly-circling and replaying Scopes Trials and surrogate actions, while religious myths are snuck back into public school classrooms and placed on an equal footing with knowledge and fact.

Or, let's go abroad: A young Christian girl who has learning difficulties created weeks of bedlam in the country of Pakistan when it was thought she burned pages of a Koran. It now appears untrue -- the pages were of an instructional text only, and apparently a plant of an Imam who wanted to rid the area of Christians.

Somehow, people never see their own religious rites as being just as absurd as they believe all other religions' rites to be.

Somehow, atheists and agnostics create unreasoning fear in believers, not that reason and religion ever deserve to be in the same thought. But, atheists continue to be the most hated and distrusted minority group in the U.S. today -- bar none.

You'd think anything and anyone hated and feared *that* much would have a good reason to be hated, wouldn't you -- besides being people who simply decide to sit out that dance.

You know, we should here tiptoe around all Israel-Palestine issues, and the entire mid-east, for fears of setting off a conversational thermonuclear firestorm that will not soon burn itself out -- the limitations of space, and of patience, you see.

However, there is the joint Jewish-Muslim protest in Berlin, over a regional court's ruling that circumcision of young boys constitutes bodily harm.

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Madness abounds and abides.

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- "Religion is like a penis," says a popular poster and bumper sticker.
- *It's fine to have one. □ It's fine to be proud of it.*
- *But please don't whip it out in public and start waving it around.*
- *And please don't try to shove it down our throats.*

Amen.

Even more simply: *Enough, already.*

Terry Jones:

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/world/gainesville-pastor-terry-jones-promoted-film-that-sparke-d-unrest-in-libya/1251112>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19562688>

Westboro hate group:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westboro_Baptist_Church

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http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/05/westboro-responds-to-wisc_n_1745173.html

Westboro's hate site:

<http://www.godhatesfags.com/>

Keeping the crazies back long enough to bury the military dead:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/06/honoring-americas-veterans-act-obama_n_1748454.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/02/veterans-bill-military-funerals_n_1733080.html

TBN:

<http://www.truthwinsout.org/blog/2012/03/23742/>

A few assorted, sordid Evangelical scandals:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scandals_involving_evangelical_Christians

Georgia:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/ten-commandments-displayed-at-state-capitol/nR5Bj/>

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Rhode Island:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46160046/ns/us_news-the_new_york_times/#.UFEEUq5jD3C

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/gavon/atheist-teen-in-rhode-island-receives-death-threat>

Pakistan:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-19532895>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19454739>

Study of most feared and hated minority groups -- atheists:

<http://atheism.about.com/od/atheistbigotryprejudice/a/AtheistsHated.htm>

Jews and Muslims in Germany:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19538584>

And, of course, much more at your fingertips, online.