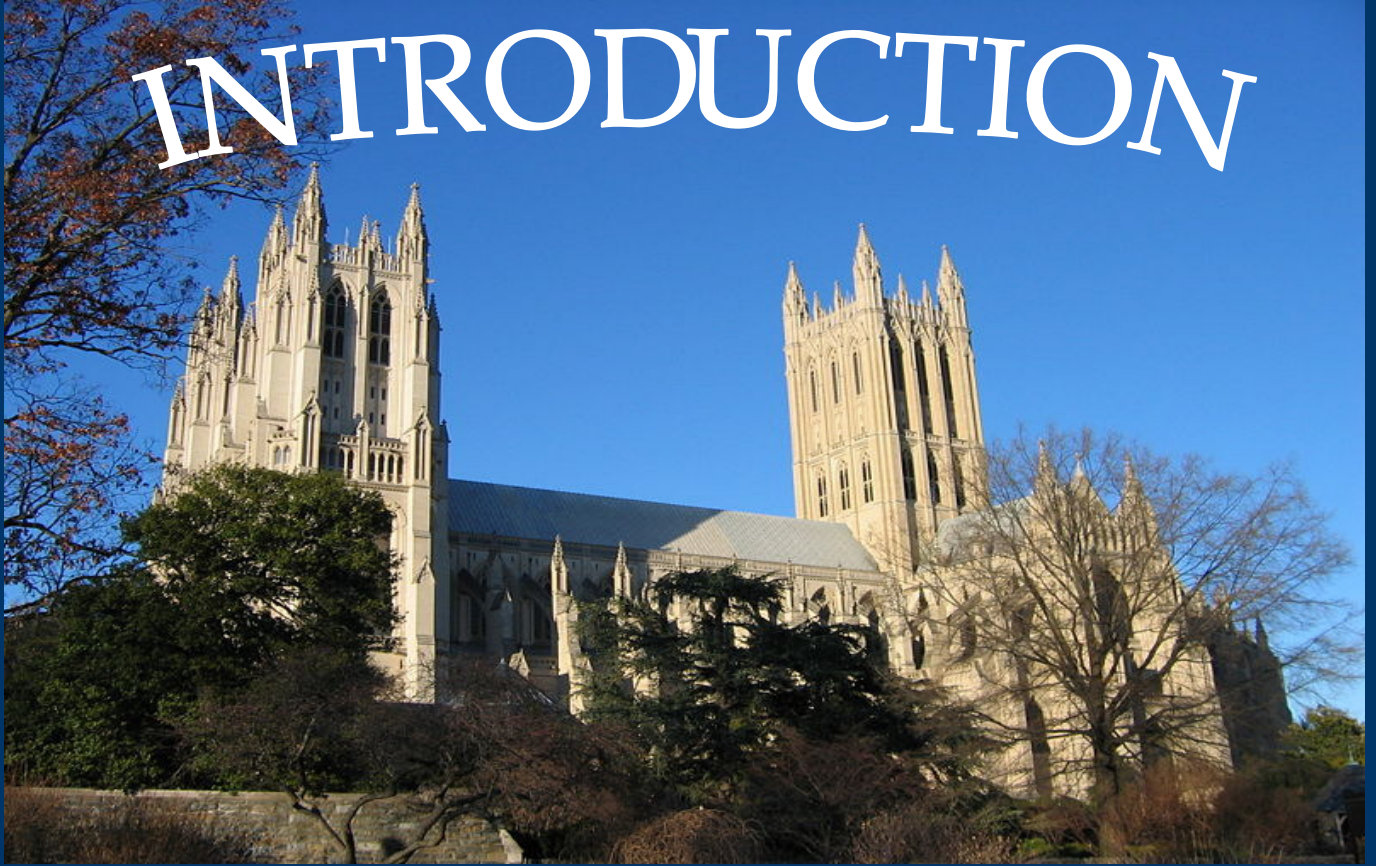


INTRODUCTION



Religion is certainly a huge issue in the modern world. You can't get by a day in the United States without hearing the word "God" uttered, without another reference. From huge churches spanning acres to bumper plate stickers and the Pledge of Allegiance, religion is everywhere. It is endlessly imminent, around every corner and in every crack.

I, myself, am one of the few in America who isn't religious at all. I have never even *touched* the Bible, and went to church only once for a baptism ceremony. I am an atheist. I do not believe in any religion - I believe in the laws of evolution, the Big Bang, and the fact that "the only thing above us is sky". Religion has always hassled and bothered me with its mocking and cruel ways - if you're not religious in this world, you are a loser... an outcast, someone who has shunned society with their sick, untrue views.

If you ask any Christian about the Big Bang or how humans were "created," they will answer that the almighty "God," the one who controls everything and everyone, ordered it. That "He" started the human race and propelled it to its significance and prosperity, that history was all part of "His" "plan". If you ask about the afterlife, they will answer that the dead go to either Hell or Heaven, and that those in Heaven sit beside "God" for eternity. Those to go to Hell live in an underground world of fire and torture that continues forever. What do the Christians think of the scientists? Well, some say that they are sinners and will go to Hell (if there is one) for denying the "power" of "God". Others just don't care what they say - life is fine when you ignore the facts.

Finally, when you ask a Christian about the EVIDENCE of “God,” Heaven, Hell, or any other topic, they will ask you about your evidence. They know that they don’t have any – that they’ll lose the fight one way or another. I want to ask all Christians one question: WHERE IS YOUR EVIDENCE?? What proof do you have of any of your beliefs? Have you ever been to the center of the Earth to see Hell? Have you any evidence of Adam and Eve? Did your ancestors come back from the dead and tell you there is a Heaven or Hell? Have you ever been sent a message by “God”? No?

I believe, like “the Earth is flat” and “alien canals on Mars” theories of the past, religion is another excuse by the human race to explain what we don’t know and will never, ever find out. Humans have an annoying habit of whipping up an answer to something nobody will ever figure out. When you are asked a question and don’t know the answer, you probably A: lie or B: say “I dunno”. When you lie, creating a false answer, people may or may not believe you. It is entirely possible that the Christian religion is based on stories and tales that are completely false. Maybe, thousands of years ago, humans were trying to explain their world. Things that confounded them – such as the creation of the universe, the Earth, and themselves – needed to be explained. If you can answer a confusing question, you look smart, right? So “God” and creationism were possibly whipped up to answer the unknowns, the “what-ifs” of the universe.

The theory we call Christianity was passed on throughout generations by those who created it. Eventually, almost everyone believed it. If you don’t want to be an idiot, why not join the Christian Club? As the Christians took over, underdogs also started to appear - those in society who knew that there was something wrong with the idea of “God”. Eventually, in 1838, they attacked in the form of Charles Darwin. The book *On the Origin of Species* was written by Darwin, who challenged the theory of creationism with his report – which, if you think about it, makes more sense than some giant invisible man in the sky who has superpowers. Since the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1838, the principles of religion have been continually challenged by science. When science and religion are compared, they both rule each other out. Science’s theories rule religion’s obsolete and unintelligent, and vice versa. As the battle for truth continues, we must admit that neither side will actually win. Humans will *never* know how the Big Bang occurred, or how life was created, or how the planets were formed. No matter how long we live, we will NEVER find out – so why not try to explain everything now? Religion is another excuse by the race to explain what we really, really want to know.

There are many, many reasons why the “God” theory is impossible. The one I favor most is this: if God was the “cause,” or “created” everything, what created “God”? You can’t say that “God” was the “creator” if “He” wasn’t

“created” – that “He” just “happened”. If you say that “God” “happened,” than I could also fairly say that the Big Bang just “happened” as well.

People, still, do not pay attention to the fact that we are hopeless to explain what we will never know. In the United States of America, the most Christian country on Earth, “God” is everywhere. Huge churches are built in every neighborhood, even in the middle of nowhere. The cross and Jesus are peppered across the land. Praying to “God” happens all the time in the U.S.A. Even though the Constitution separates church and government, Christianity somehow has slipped into a crack, and the U.S. government is failing to keep up its duty to stay away from religion. Besides the government, the Christians of America have pushed Christianity into places where it simply does not need to be. The American media, mostly Christian, has introduced many stereotypes about the non-Christian population. While the United States is a free country, it is too Christian to be a friendly country. Since I am the only one who is really thinking about it, I will reveal to you what America the “Free” has done to become the most Christian chunk of land in history. So sit back, and be stunned by what America has to offer to its Christian citizens.

PART I – CHRISTIANITY AT SCHOOL

American schools, besides being under funded and full of errors and flaws, also have another bad characteristic – the introduction of religion. While in the United States religion is not allowed to be inducted into the school curriculum, somehow the government has overlooked some flaws with the law. The first problem can be found at any school in the early morning – the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance is a sadistic push by the United States government to force its students (“little, worthless mice”) to pledge their allegiance to the country. Besides being a pointless waste of time, there are two words in the pledge that completely change its religious perspective.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America,
one nation, under “God”, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Yes, that’s right – **UNDER “GOD”**. First, not everyone in the school is Christian – some are Muslims, Jewish, or atheists - so why force the students to say “under ‘God’” every morning? That’s just how the United States wants to show off its worthless students – by making them all Christian. Then they’ll all be smart because they can explain the unexplained! But, I must ask for the millionth time, *what if* there is no “God”?? If I don’t believe in it, then why should I be forced by

the government to say it? It is really stupid to say that the U.S. is “under” something if it might be under nothing.

“Under ‘God’” has not been in the pledge since it was first drafted in the 1800s. The Knights of Columbus, a Roman Catholic organization, felt that the pledge needed some sort of religious direction in it. In 1951, the KC decided to inject the words into the pledge. The new pledge spread throughout the KC community. But it wasn’t until February 1954 that the evil modification was thrown into the government.

It was February 7, or Lincoln Sunday. The Reverend George M. MacPherson was to make a speech about the Gettysburg Address at the Lincoln pew, a pew rented by Lincoln during his presidency. Many members of government were attending the speech, including President Dwight Eisenhower. In the speech, the Reverend called for the addition of the words “under ‘God’” to the official pledge. Eisenhower liked the idea, and the president discussed it in Congress the next day. Eventually, Representative Charles Oakman wrote up a bill to add the words to the Pledge. His speech on the bill offended many by suggesting that Christianity is an essential part of “American life”:

Last Sunday, the President of the United States and his family occupied the pew where Abraham Lincoln worshipped. The pastor, the Reverend George M. Docherty, suggested the change in our Pledge of Allegiance that I have offered [as a bill]. Dr. Docherty delivered a wise sermon. He said that as a native of Scotland come to these shores he could appreciate the pledge as something more than a hollow verse taught to children for memory. I would like to quote from his words. He said, 'there was something missing in the pledge, and that which was missing was the characteristic and definitive factor in the American way of life.' Mr. Speaker, I think Mr. Docherty hit the nail square on the head.

Eisenhower signed the bill into law on Flag Day (June 14) 1954. The pledge, since that fatal day, has remained untouched. For almost 54 years, American children have been forced to speak the words of the Christians, whether they like it or not.

I am appalled that the United States government could be so easily convinced into promoting the Christian religion when it is clearly violating its own principles. Numerous court cases have been filed against the Pledge for its religious leaning, and *all* of them have found that the words “under ‘God’” are in violation of the Constitution. Also, one 2006 court case in Florida found that even *requiring* students to say the Pledge was in violation of the 1st and 14th amendments of the Constitution. There, currently, is no way to avoid having to do something during the Pledge. Even *standing*, according to the 2006 case, which is required regardless of whether or not the student got parental permission to opt out, is unconstitutional.

If you don't know already, I am just a 6th grader at Spring Forest Middle School, possibly one of the most annoying schools in the city of Houston, Texas. At SFMS, the pledge is required every morning. As you can guess, I *despise* reciting it. It wastes precious time and goes against my religious views. Also, being an Australian citizen, I don't want to pledge my allegiance to the United States – I just live here, I don't *love* this country.

Now, I didn't just write this long, long report just to tell you the truth – I am going to do some of the things I have written down. First, **I will not say the words “under ‘God’” when reciting the Pledge.** If I have a choice, I will not take part in the Pledge at all. Also, I will **try to convince the school (without getting a detention) to abolish the requirement of the pledge.** I am *not* American! Why should I give my allegiance to a country that I have no relations to?

Besides the Pledge of Allegiance, many teachers in the United States' public schools are Christian – so they may insert their own religious views into a punishment. The best example is of saying the sentence “Oh my ‘God’” in a Christian teacher's classroom. “Oh my ‘God’” is a common exclamation used by teenagers all the time, whether in the OM“G” form or saying the entire thing. I bet I'm not the only one who has experienced this – a couple of friends in class are talking, and then one of them exclaims “Oh my ‘God’!” The teacher looks up and says “Don't say that!” The student asks why, and the teacher responds “It is disrespectful”.

Yeah, it really is disrespectful – to *you!* All Christians have different views on the growingly controversial sentence. Most Christian children and teenagers have not been taught the rule about “Oh my ‘God’”. Why? Because the parents probably use it – so why not them? If their parents are approving of “Oh my ‘God’,” why can't they use it at school? Simply because of the one teacher who takes it as “taboo”. Besides, it could be used as “Oh my god,” which is not directed to the Christian “God” but rather their own little god. Use it *that* way, and no-one will get mad at you.

PART II: CHRISTIANITY VS. ISLAM

Islam, firstly, is not a *bad* religion! Whenever people (Christians) here in America talk about Muslims in a bad way – just because they're Muslims – it makes me want to call them evil and stupid. Muslims are the most misunderstood people I have ever seen. Just because a handful of terrorists were Muslims, that doesn't mean that *all* of them are.

Ever since September 11, the Islamic religion has been under a lot of anger and hate by Americans. Apparently, Christians in the U.S. have pushed the idea that Muslims are “evil” and will throw a grenade at you if you don’t shut up and do what they say. They will fly airplanes into your buildings! They will bomb your parking garages! They will *steal your iPod!* RUN!

For all the idiots in this country that actually are *afraid* of Muslims, I hate to break it to you – they aren’t walking down the street to put a bomb in a trash can. I can guarantee you that 99.999999% of all Muslims are just like everyone else. They are not “possessed” or “crazy”. They are nice, caring people that have obviously been affected by the terrors of 9/11 and the London bombings just as much as you have, if not more. *Trust* me, I know many Muslims, and they are not trying to kidnap me right now.

Really, who *cares* if Barack Obama’s middle name is Hussein? It’s just a name, folks! Obama is not going to become a terrorist dictator just because his middle name was the last name of the former dictator of Iraq. Arab people in the mall are not going to pull out an AK-47 and start shooting people while yelling “Mighty Allah!!” While I can understand how American Christians felt about Muslims after the attacks, it’s got to STOP NOW. It’s been almost *six years* since a few demented Muslims flew airplanes into buildings and grassy fields in Pennsylvania. All people in the United States who despise, hate, or have prejudicial views about Muslims have “religious intolerance” (the religious term for being a racist). The people in this under-educated country who are afraid of Muslims obviously haven’t met one or read about the ideas of Islam.

But it isn’t just the citizens’ fault – it’s the American media (CNN) that started this horrible anger against Muslims. Since 9/11, CNN has portrayed Muslims as terrorists, and with the millions of people who watch this terrible network, word spread. Eventually, CNN had started an American revolution against Muslims. The Cable News Network has continually aired reports showing Arabs and Muslims killing and bombing each other, with no remorse. This violence has brainwashed the public into believing that the unrest in the Middle East may happen here, too. Over and over, CNN pushes the anti-Muslim agenda into the public. Now, since their success, Muslims wearing their traditional clothing and practicing their beliefs are continually stared at, gossiped about, laughed at, and overall harassed by Americans. American children usually play games that run like this: “Last one to the driveway is a Muslim!” They are *so evil!*

For whoever is reading this right now, I must ask – at any time in your life, did a Muslim attack you? Kidnap you? Were you ever afraid (even just a little) of Muslims? The first two probably never happened... but the third either happened in 2001 – 2002 or, hopefully, never occurred to you. Since a Middle

Eastern person has never actually hurt *you*, why should you be afraid of them? It's not a "natural" response, is it? – it's a fear of something you don't understand. There are a few simple solutions to becoming a Muslim-friendly person.

1. **Be nice to Muslims.** – There are way too many people in this country that have angry feelings towards Muslims. The evil, terrible humans in society that pick on or hurt Muslims deserve to be thrown in a jungle and be eaten by unusual animals. If you want to be a friendly person, get Muslim friends. When someone insults Muslim people, get really, *really* mad at them. If you want, you can hit them. When Muslims are portrayed as "bad" people on TV (CNN), write angry and swear-full emails and letters to Lou Dobbs. If teenagers are laughing at a Muslim walking by, go over to them and tell them off. If they have bats, rocks or paper airplanes, stay away. Finally, remind the person sitting next to you on a bench that "Hussein" is just a name, not an "I'm a terrorist!" badge for Barack Obama.
2. **Don't stare at Muslims.** – Americans have a tendency to stare at Muslims wearing their traditional clothing. When in the mall, on the bus or in the park, make it a habit *not* to look at them. When you stare at a Muslim person, it's usually because you are having problems with different religions. Muslims are no different than Christians, so if you see a traditional Muslim walking by, don't stare at them for long periods of time like they're aliens or something. They are human beings too, not any different from the casually-dressed people on the street.
3. **For security guards, police, and Customs inspectors: don't treat Muslims more hastily than Christians.** – I hate it when the security guards and inspectors in this country treat Muslims worse just because they're Muslim, and therefore *must* be the dangerous cellphone-snatching terrorists. Not only is this illegal under a numberless amount of laws, it is just plain wrong. Only if a Muslim (or any other person, for that matter) is carrying a bomb or gun onto the plane or across the border should you become suspicious. Don't add extra, more thorough security checks to Muslim people – treat them like any other person in line. Police shouldn't be any more hostile towards a Muslim than any other person who was speeding on Interstate 10. Finally, *never, ever, ever* shoot a dangerous Muslim if they don't need to be shot. Treat every situation equally!
4. **Don't gossip about Muslims.** – Gossiping is just for people who have no life. When you see a Muslim walking by, don't suddenly

start talking about them. So they're wearing their custom clothes – so what? They're still human, and if you gossip about them, you aren't!

5. **Don't get mad at Muslims for being Muslims.** – At public schools, social studies classes teach the ideas of the Islamic religion as part of the curriculum. Don't be one of those annoying, in-your-face religious people who want everyone to believe in "God". I hate it when those in-your-face Christians criticize other people for being different. Never go up to your kid's history teacher asking that they stop teaching about Islam in school. Don't get stirred up with hatred against the local Muslims for being so – gosh – *different*. Stop passing out letters encouraging people to go to church – there are too many churches to notice, and everyone in this country knows that there is a Christian church down the road that they can join. You don't have to push it! Just let the Muslims be Muslims! It's their life, people!

Muslims have a life just like yours. They are not evil or hating. *Muslims are people.* Don't be a stupid idiot! Treat Muslims equally. You'll set a great example.

Religion in America

PARTS III, IV and V – June 30th, 2008

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1. Paragraph about the “creation of ‘God’ problem” added.
2. “Charles Dickens” changed to “Charles Darwin”

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QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD TRY TO ANSWER:

1. If “God” is the “creator” of everything, how was “God” “created”?
2. Does the Christian religion have any MATERIAL EVIDENCE of “God”?
3. How is it possible that “God” exists with so many other gods and their various stories across the world?
4. If the Pledge of Allegiance is technically unconstitutional, why do American students still say it every morning?