

What is It Like to Live Without a Religion?



by Carl Nelson

“Sunday is the golden clasp that binds together the volume of the week.”

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Humans can't. So we don't personally know what it is like to live without religion, because humans have imagination. Imagination is how humans orient and direct themselves. The endpoint of all imagination being a manifestation of God, humans are incapable of living without a religion – although they might very well ‘imagine’ such a state. And indeed, save a traditional, all-inclusive, generally accepted religion, people's beliefs will wander off (some scurry) in all directions so that on the whole their peregrinations resemble the Tower of Babel, a frayed spiraling

rope heading towards the heavens while never leaving the ground, rather like an airplane whose airfoil is aerodynamically insufficient. Because a true religion fosters wholeness and quiet fulfillment, while a false religion, like a neurosis, offers the same novel possibilities, again and again like an impoverished mind.

We currently inhabit such a wasteland.

When I happen to read the comments, if allowed, following a particularly reasoned essay in a widely read journal or magazine, it's hard not to be struck by the idiosyncratic, irrelevant, eccentric, and downright doorknob incomprehension elicited. The thrust of the essay would seem absolutely by the way, and its value lying only in the fact of its fleeting prominence and the particular minor (or major) way it touched upon some aspect of the reader's life. Or the comments are a simple jostle for attention, or both.

If reasoned comment brings forth such chaotic onslaught of inchoate expressions, the author must sometimes wonder why, after reading these responses that they trouble to write at all. It reminds me of a critic's comment made about the current Presidential debates that the winner is the candidate who has managed to create the two or three most memorable memes. Or, remembering the 2020 Democratic primary debates, it was the candidate who promised the most stuff. Analysis, breadth of thought, how well they have brought experience to their vision, and the financially and legally sound practical solutions the candidate proposes would seem to be too much trouble to consider. It all sounds too much like a Thanksgiving dinner, and very little about Thanksgiving.

As a boy it seemed our society was much better self-regulated. When we attended church on Sunday, this marked the high point of our civilization. We dressed well. We acted properly. We listened and considered what was timeless, and how that might help us to better understand our here and now. And when we

made observations and comments, they were in response to serious consideration of the sermon – narcissism was frowned upon. Moreover, we had to sit still and act mature. The rest of our week also bent the knee in homage.

Solzhenitsyn, after years of research as to the final collapse of the great Russian experiment into Stalinism, famously noted: “More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: “Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.”

False religions and psychological neuroses have much in common, to my thinking. To reiterate, a false religion, like a neurosis, offers the same novelties, again and again like an impoverished mind. And a neurosis may well mature into a psychosis if its working adjustment to reality is overwhelmed. The ensuing frustrations can drive people towards sadism – which is simply trying for human connection in the most psychotic and counterproductive way.

(“Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do.” – Jesus of Nazareth)

I think the linkage today forming between the pro-Palestine Western Youth and Hamas, are harbingers of the End Times for both the false religions of modernity – Fascism, Socialism, Communism, Post-Modernism, Feminism, Progressive Wokeisms, etc. – and the most dominant false religion of the medieval world, Islam.

Unfortunately, the rest of us are caught up in these End Times. To survive, we must somehow isolate these barbaric hoards, like a growing tumor, so that the body as a whole is not lost. And we must protect those islands of civilization, much like the monks of medieval times, until the barbarism extinguishes itself. It is very important that we support

Israel.