**Religion**

**In a survey that correlated Americans’ incomes with their religious affiliations, Reform Jews emerged as the most affluent group, with 67 percent making more than $75,000. Hindus were second, with 65 percent at that income level, and Conservative Jews were third, with 57 percent. Pentecostals, Baptists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses were the least affluent, with less than 20 percent making $75,000. *(Pew Research Center, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 27, 2011)***

**Albania is the only country that has officially banned all religions. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Americans are rapidly becoming less religious. 23% now identify with no religion, up from 16.1% in 2007. The "nones" now outnumber Catholics (21%) and mainline Protestants (15%). Overall, 70.6% of Americans identify as Christian, down from 78.4% sever years ago. *(Pew Research Center, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 22, 2015)***

**Superstition is the religion of feeble minds. *(Edmund Burke)***

**It is the test of a good religion whether you can joke about it. *(G. K. Chesterton)***

**As the Supreme Court stated in 1893, in examining the foundations of this country, "This is a religious people; this is a Christian nation." But it was even a certain sort of Christian nation; it was a nation where the gospel was proclaimed: it was an evangelical nation. As late as 1776, 99 percent of the people were of this basic religious persuasion. *(Dr. D. James Kennedy)***

**At least seven evangelical Christian churches have been established in Baghdad since the U.S. invaded. So far, they are focusing their efforts on converting other Christians, not Muslims. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 15, 2005)***

**Historians count over one hundred different creeds among the followers of Jesus in the first three centuries. *(Janet Bock, in The Jesus Mystery, p. 133)***

**A cult is a religion with no political power. *(Tom Wolfe)***

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**This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brains, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness. *(The Dalai Lama)***

**My religion is kindness. *(The Dalai Lama)***

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**I drove to Bihac in the former Yugoslavia with a Croatian translator, Kadi, who pretended to be Serbian when we were stopped by Serbian soldiers. It was easy for Kadi to pretend to be Serbian because Serbs and Croats are so much alike that the only way they can tell each other apart is by religion. And most of them aren't religious. So the difference between Serbs and Croats is that the Serbs don't go to Eastern Orthodox services and the Croats don't celebrate Mass. And the difference between Serbs and Muslims is that five times a day the Muslims don't pray to Mecca. *(P. J. O'Rourke, in All the Trouble in the World)***

**Claims of discrimination against Muslims in U.S. workplaces rose to 1,490 last year, up from 1,304 in 2008. The number of workplace-bias claims surpassed the previous high of 1,463 made in 2002, in the wake of 9/11. *(MSNBC, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 24, 2010)***

**Official recognition of Druidry as a religion “is but the latest example of how the bedrock creed of this country is being undermined,” said Melanie Phillips. This week the British government decided that self-proclaimed Druids – a “bunch of eccentrics” who like to dress up in robes and prance about at Stonehenge, chanting at the sun – belong to a full-fledged religion, deserving of “the tax exemptions and other advantages that follow.” Why does it bother me? Because what is really being embraced is “the fanatical religious creed of the Left – the worship of equality.” Druidry is simply not a religion. It recognizes no supreme being or code of practice. Yet it is now accorded the same status in British society as Christianity. Why not similarly elevate the fictional religion of the Jedi, which, according to the most recent census, claims far more adherents in Britain than Druidity? “If all creeds, however absurd, have equal meaning, then every belief is equally meaningless.” And that’s where we are today, in a world in which civil servants are allowed to take paid leave to perform pagan rituals and wave wands around. “How on earth has our supposedly rational society come to subscribe to so much totally barking mumbo jumbo?” *(The Week magazine, October 15, 2010)***

**The soul of a civilization is its religion, and it dies with its faith. (*Will & Ariel Durant, American historians)***

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**My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind. *(Albert Einstein)***

**True religion is real living; living with all one’s soul, with all one’s goodness and righteousness. *(Albert Einstein)***

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**A professor at the University of Southern California has given what he calls “The Five M's of Religious Evolution.” They are: The Man, The Message, The Movement, The Machine, The Monument. *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 5)***

**How did people explain everything before the invention of religion? *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**Under the Bush administration’s faith-based initiative, 98.3 percent of the $1.7 billion in federal funds awarded to religious organizations has gone to Christian groups. Jewish organizations got 1 percent; Muslim organizations, 0.34 percent; and interfaith groups, 0.16 percent. *(The Boston Globe, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 20, 2006)***

**A Dartmouth Medical School study found that heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in group activities and did not find comfort in religion. Within six months of surgery, 21 patients had died -- but there were no deaths among the 37 people who said they were “deeply religious.” *(Malcolm McConnell, in Reader’s Digest)***

**As Western nations become wealthier, organized religion plays a smaller role in our lives. But the void between questions and answers remains, creating an opportunity. So we look to Google as our immediate, all-knowing oracle of answers from trivial to profound. Google is our modern-day god. If you have a smartphone or internet connection, your prayers will always be answered. Think back on every fear, every hope, every desire you've confessed to Google's search box. Is there any entity you've trusted more with your secrets? Does anybody know you better than Google? *(Scott Galloway, in Esquire)***

**Mikhail Gorbachev seems to be a recent convert to the social utility of religion. In promising to relax restrictions on religion, he almost paraphrased George Washington’s opinion that religion and morality are the twin pillars of healthy national life. Religious renewal will strengthen the moral fiber that holds together marriage, family, workplace and, yes, even the nation. But authentic religion shapes a morality not in order to be socially useful to the state, but rather to become obedient to God. Further, obedience to God does not end with private, personal morality. It extends, as indeed the prophets extended it, to the public life of the society. The prophetic call for justice is discomforting to every nation. *(Robert Benne, in Los Angeles Times)***

**Religion should be a guide for people to follow, not the law by which to live. *(George Roush, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**The main religion in Haiti is voodoo, unofficially. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich, and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor. *(Patrick Henry)***

**Americans are religiously illiterate, said Stephen Prothero. A new study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life has confirmed just how little most people in this supposedly pious nation know about the Bible and the tenets of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or any of the world’s major faiths. Oh 32 simple questions on world religion – questions as basic as naming the first book of the Bible (Genesis) – the nation as a whole got only 50 percent correct. That’s an “F” in any school. Does this matter? It sure does. “Even if religion doesn’t make any sense to you, you can’t make sense of the world without knowing something about the world’s religions.” Faith plays a major role in the lives, politics, and decisions of billions of people, and has helped shape nations and history. Do we really want to raise children who know nothing of the Bible; or about how Christianity differs from Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam; or why India and Pakistan glower at each other from behind nuclear stockpiles? Children who leave school knowing nothing about the world’s religions are not truly educated. *(The Week magazine, October 15, 2010)***

**The ancient Greeks and Romans painted pictures, but we have very few of them left. There are several reasons for this. First, of course, is the fact that they are more perishable than marble. Another reason is that a great number were destroyed in 1497 when one of Savonarola’s zealot followers gathered all the ancient Greek and Roman works of art he could find, piled them up, and set fire to the whole works. What a tragedy in the name of religion! He said they were pagan. Same thing with the famous library at Alexandria, Egypt, burned a couple of times, first by the Christians, then by the Moslems. After all, they said, if it was in the Bible (or Koran), all those books were repetitions; and if it wasn’t, it couldn’t be true. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 215)***

**In Arabic, the word Islam means “submission.” (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 261)***

**About 70,000 people in Australia follow the Jedi religion (inspired by the Star Wars films). (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 261)***

**When joy is put back into religion, there will be more religion in the world. (Charles Fillmore)**

**Among all my patients in the second half of life – that is to say, over 35 – there has not been a one whose problem in the last resort was not that of trying to find a religious outlook on life. *(C. G. Jung)***

**My ancestors were Puritans from England. They arrived in the United States in the hope of finding greater restrictions than were permissible under the English law at the time. *(Garrison Keillor)***

**The three largest religions in the world: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 261)***

**70% of Americans say religion is losing its influence on American life. 61% say they’re a member of a church or synagogue, the lowest percentage ever recorded in polls. *(Gallup poll, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 14, 2011)***

**Today, about a third of people who were raised Catholic have left the church; no other major religion in the United States has experienced a larger net loss in followers in the last 30 years. *(Charles E. Curran, in Newsweek, June 14, 2010)***

**The true religion of America has always been America. *(Norman Mailer)***

**Good week for: Infidels, heretics, and apostates, after a new Pew Forum poll found that 70 percent of Americans, including 57 percent of evangelical Christians, agree that “many religions can lead to eternal life.” *(The Week magazine, July 4-11, 2008)***

**Where is Mecca? The birthplace of Muhammad lies 45 miles inland from the Red Sea in southwestern Saudi Arabia. Its 300,000 inhabitants are all Muslims; non-Muslims are prohibited. Over 2 million Muslims annually make the pilgrimage to the city. *(Barbara Berliner, in The Book of Answers, p. 184)***

**About 60 Muslims – electricians, ironworkers, financial analysts, restaurant workers, secretaries – died when the World Trade Center was destroyed by Islamic radicals on 9/11. Muslims who worked in the buildings prayer daily at a prayer room on the 17th floor of the south tower. “It had the feel of a real mosque,” said Zafar Sareshwala, a financial executive who sometimes prayed there. “It was so freeing and so calm.” *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 24, 2010)***

**So we are a religious nation? Very. 90% of us believe in God, 81% in heaven, 78% in angels, 70% in hell, and 70% in the devil (Gallup Poll). 6 in 10 believe the stories in the Bible are literally true (ABCnews.com). To the fury of biology teachers, only 13% of us believe that human evolution occurred naturally, without divine intervention (CBS News). Most of us pray regularly, and 74% believe that if a prayer goes unanswered it probably didn’t fit into God’s plan (U.S. News & World Report). *(The Week magazine, January 7, 2005)***

**You don’t need to be religious to believe that the world is a wonderful place. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**Law of Nepal stipulates nobody has the right to try to convert somebody else from one religion to another. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Americans who say they have no religion now outnumber evangelical white Protestants. This number of Americans with no religion has nearly doubled since 2003 -- rising to 21 percent -- while the number of white evangelicals has fallen from 21 percent to 13 percent. *(ABCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 25, 2018)***

**The number of Mormons in the U.S. grew by 45 percent to 6.1 million between 2000 and 2010, according to a new study by the Association of Religion Data Archives. The census found that the number of Catholics, the largest single faith, declined 5 percent to 58.9 million during the decade. *(Reuters.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 18, 2012)***

**Hinduism is the oldest formalized religion in the world. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Bad week for: Catholic-Protestant relations, after Pope Benedict XVI issued an official document that declared Roman Catholicism the only real Christian religion. Protestant churches, the pope said, “cannot be called ‘churches’ in the proper sense.” *(The Week magazine, July 20, 2007)***

**Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction. *(Blaise Pascal)***

**Religious patents: According to Wired magazine, the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office in recent years has approved at least a half-dozen technologies owned by churches and religious orders. A sampling:
\* Wireless headphones (Mormons)
\* Body mike (Scientologists)
\* Wind turbine (Jesuit group in Chicago)
\* Animal-watering apparatus (Hutterian Brethren Church in Alberta)*(Rocky Mountain News)***

**A person’s religion is not what he or she professes to believe; it’s reflected in the way he lives. *(John Luther)***

**Among politicians the esteem of religion is profitable; the principles of it are troublesome … None are so empty as those who are full of themselves. *(Benjamin Whichcote, a British religious scholar in the 1600s)***

**The West was caught unprepared by the rise of the Islamic State, as it was a decade and a half ago by the attacks of al Qaidi. The unpreparedness was not accidental. It happened because of a blind spot in the secular mind: the inability to see the elemental, world-shaking power of religion when hijacked by politics. Ever since the rise of modern science, intellectuals have been convinced that faith is in intensive care, about to die. What the secularists forgot is that Homo sapiens is the meaning-seeking animal. If there is one thing the great institutions of the modern world do not do, it is to provide meaning. Religion has returned because it is hard to live without meaning." *(Jonathan Sacks, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Religion is man’s quest for assurance that he can live by faith and love while doubt and fear lay siege to his heart. It is his attempt to resolve inward dilemma by organizing his relations with the world in a way that will serve his need for security and fulfillment. It is the search for what is enduring in time and eternity. *(Oren Huling Baker, in Human Nature Under God)***

**Real religion is a way of life, not a while cloak to be wrapped around us on the Sabbath and then cast aside into the six-day closet of unconcern. *(William Arthur Ward)***

**A pair of Tennessee women called at the White House one day seeking the release of their rebel husbands from a Northern prison. One of them argued for the release because her husband was a deeply religious man. “Madame,” said Abraham Lincoln, “you say your husband is a religious man. Perhaps I am not a good judge of these things, but in my opinion the religion that makes men rebel and fight against a just government in defense of an unjust institution that makes slaves of men whom God made free is not the genuine article. The religion that reconciles men to the idea of eating their breads in the sweat of other men’s faces is not the kind to get to heaven on.” Ultimately, Lincoln gave way in the face of the women’s appeals – but not before he urged them to reexamine their own religious practices. “True patriotism,” observed Lincoln, “is more holy than false piety.” *(Bob Dole in Great Presidential Wit, p. 33)***

**The story is told of five men sitting around a potbellied stove, arguing about which is the “right” religion – which offers the greatest assurance of salvation. It was a fruitless discussion because no one could agree. Finally they turned to a wise old fellow who had been sitting in the corner, listening. “Gentlemen,” he said, “when the cotton is picked, there are several ways to get it to the gin. We can take the northern route – it’s long but the road is better. Or we can take the southern route, which is shorter but filled with chuckholes. Or we can go over the mountain, even though it’s more perilous. When we reach the gin, though, the man doesn’t ask which way we came. He simply Asks, ‘Brother, how good is your cotton?’” *(Dale Turner, in Grateful Living)***

**My religion considers everything equally sacred – so I’m excused from worshipping anything in particular. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity. *(St. Augustine)***

**I won't take my religion from any man who never works except with his mouth. *(Carl Sandburg, poet)***

**Religion consists of two things: To see Truth (God) and do good. *(Seneca)***

**Religion is a great force – the only real motive force in the world. But you must get at a man through his own religion, not yours. *(George Bernard Shaw)***

**A religion that is small enough for our understanding would not be large enough for our needs. *(Arthur Balfour, British philosopher-statesman)***

**America’s national religion: “Is religion losing ground to sports?” asked Chris Beneke and Arthur Remillard. As religious affiliation and church attendance wane, tens of millions of people are forging “powerful, cohesive communities” around their sports teams. More than six in 10 Americans now consider themselves fans – double the percentage from 50 years ago – and “modern sports stadiums function much like great cathedrals once did,” giving fans of the Red Sox Nation, University of Alabama Crimson Tide, or Seattle Seahawks intense experiences of community and transcendence. Perhaps that’s why cities and states devote hundreds of millions to building new stadiums. Today, millions of people are passionately devoted to their teams, and their tribal fervor rivals that of religious people’s for their particular denomination or sect. Indeed, on weekends, many houses of worship are half empty; everyone’s watching sports. Back in the 18th and 19th centuries, clergymen worried that “religion and sports would vie for loyalty,” and often railed about how the playing fields promoted worship of false idols. Imagine how horrified they’d be today. *(The Week magazine, February 14, 2014)***

**There is an old story about a king who had a beautiful ring and three sons. Each son wanted the ring. When the king died, he left three rings for his sons and a note that said, "My dear sons, one of these rings is real and two are fake. The way you will know who has the real ring is that the son with the real ring will be kind and generous to all people." Each of the three spent the rest of his life being good to prove that he had the real ring. It's the same with religions. The way to show that your religion is true is not to yell and scream about it. The way to show that your religion is true is to live. *(Rabbi Marc Gellman & Msgr. Thomas Hartman, in How Do You Spell God?)***

**We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another. *(Jonathan Swift, English satirist, author, clergyman)***

**Religion is a temper, not a pursuit. *(Harriet Martineau, English writer and social critic)***

**On the first Sunday after the terrorist attacks, people filled the pews at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Louisville, Ky., seeking solace in a sermon about grief and joining together to sing “America the Beautiful.” That day, the church drew 200 people, significantly more than the average attendance of 150, and for the next two Sundays the crowds kept coming. But by Sunday attendance was back to normal at St. Andrew's, an average-sized American church, as it has been in recent weeks at houses of worship across the country. Americans, who after the attacks turned to religion in an outpouring that some religious leaders hailed as a spiritual “great awakening,” have now mostly returned to their former habits. “I just don't see much indication that there has been a great awakening or a profound change in America's religious practices,” said Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll. *(Rocky Mountain News, November 26, 2001)***

**On June 8, 632 A.D., in Medina, located in present-day Saudi Arabia, Muhammad, one of the most influential religious and political leaders in history, died. In 610 A.D. he had a vision that commanded him to become the Arab prophet of the “true religion.” Thus began a lifetime of religious revelations, which he and others collected as the Quran. *(MOMENTS IN TIME –The History Channel)***

**When religion is understood, it is a great blessing to humanity; but when it is not understood it is a curse.  Peace, harmony, and brotherly love are fruits of the understanding of religion and worship. On the other hand, strife and religious wars are the fruits of misunderstanding. *(George M. Lamsa, in Old Testament Light, p. 550)***

**The number of Web pages dealing with God and religion is booming, Religion, in fact, is now nearly as popular an Internet topic as sex: A search for "sex" on Google returns about408 million hits; a search for "God" yields 396 million. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 30, 2007)***

**Followers of Wicca, a nature-based religion, use pentagrams as symbols of their faith. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 261)***

**The role of religion is to not help one side win the battle. The role of religion is to lift us above the battlefield. The role of religion is to lift us to the level of consciousness where we see that beyond this drama being played out, of us versus them, beyond this drama being played out of hatred and separation, there is a truer truth, and the truer truth is that we all love each other. *(Marianne Williamson***

**The word religion comes from a root word that means “bind together.” Thus the word actually means unity, oneness, wholeness. *(Eric Butterworth, in Spiritual Economics, p. 1)***

**The word “religion” (religio) means “to rebind, to collect together, to compose, to unite.” *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 5)***

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**It is a fine thing to establish one's own religion in one's heart, not to be dependent on traditions and second-hand ideals. Life will seem to you, later, not a lesser, but a greater thing. *(D. H. Lawrence)***