

VERILY GOD DID SAY UNTO ADAM:
“PULL MY FINGER”

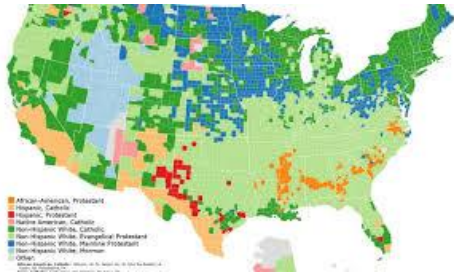


RELIGION

RELIGION A SOCIAL-CULTURAL SYSTEM OF DESIGNATED BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES, MORALS, WORLDVIEWS, TEXTS, SANCTIFIED PLACES, PROPHECIES, ETHICS, OR ORGANIZATIONS, THAT RELATES HUMANITY TO SUPERNATURAL, TRANSCENDENTAL, OR SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS

THE MOST COMMON RELIGIONS ARE (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

- AGNOSTICISM & ATHEISM
- ANIMISM
- BUDDHISM
- CHRISTIANITY
- HINDUISM
- ISLAM
- JAINISM
- JUDAISM
- SIKHISM
- TAOISM



Recovering
from
Religion



JOIN US FOR
A NEW
ADVENTURE

CELEBRATE
WITH US AS
WE GROW



As I See Religion

- Religion generally includes
 - Belief in a god/gods
 - Belief in supernatural realities
 - Meaning of life
 - Rationalization of violence
- Earliest form of Terror Management
 - Humans had no idea what caused large geo- and weather-related events
 - Had no explanation for why bad things happened to innocuous people
- Deus ex Machina: a handy concept



RELIGION

It's All In Your Perspective

- Religion is used to reject arguments
 - “I reject fill in the blank because it assumes god is not in charge
- It promotes clever and deceptive messages
 - Christ was a man therefore women cannot lead
- It leads, however, to worshipping the created instead of the creator
- They warn of bad earthly behavior
 - All religions have warnings to this effect
 - Religious warriors tend to ignore it

Earliest Religions

- Earliest religions are not known to us
 - Cave paintings may have had religious significance, but we have no way of knowing what early humans had in mind when they had “religious” feelings
- The most we have are figurines which portray either pregnant or chubby women
 - Examples exist as early as 35,000 years to the A period, and as late as 11,000 years ago in the Magdalenian period
- Experts have drawn the conclusion that these figurines represent Earth goddesses
 - They come from mostly from Europe but have also been unearthed in Siberia
 - There are 144 of them in total (representing about 23,000 years of human culture)
- Either they were or were not religious icons



Earliest Known Religions

- These were (and still are in some areas) those religious observances associated with Hunter-Gatherer cultures
 - The natives of the Kalahari Desert are the most notable of these peoples
- The deities and rites of these religions were/are focused on nature and focus on keeping it aware of human activity
 - A form of permission for predatory actions and well-wishing on vital plants

Common Threads of Religion

- Males abrogated the role as religious leaders to themselves
 - Women were occasionally included as important participants, but were never in charge
- Religious rites stressed group identity
 - Out groups were treated differently, even if they followed the same nominal gods
- Moral codes locked on to local cultural practices and beliefs
- And children were seen as, well (Next Slide)

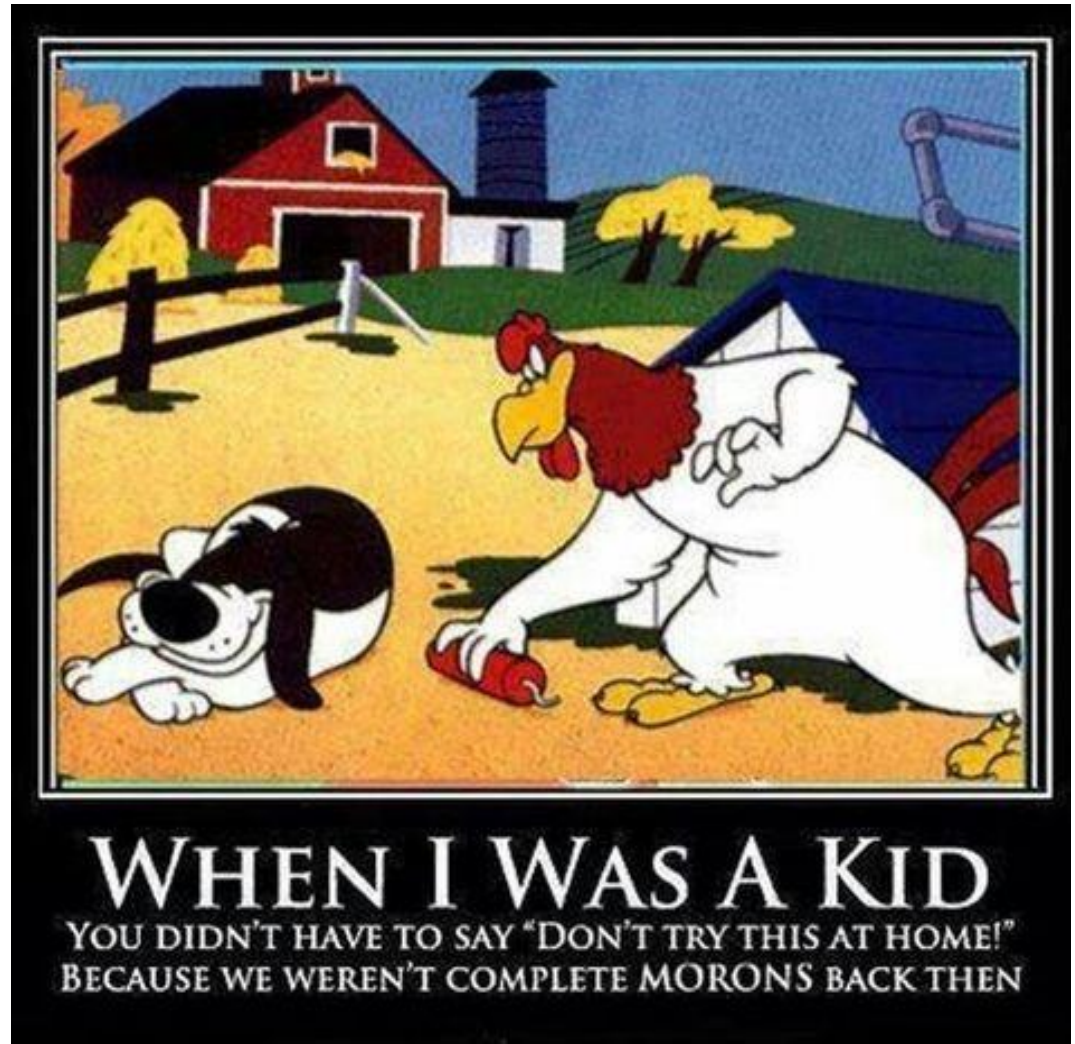
Younger Generations Always Suck

**ELEMENTARY KIDS HAVE
IPHONES.
WHEN I WAS A KID,
I PUT GLUE ON MY HANDS
JUST
SO I COULD PEEL
IT OFF WHEN IT DRIED.**

When I was
a kid they
didn't call it
"Behavioral
Disorders",
They called
it "Being a
little brat"



facebook.com/loveable



WHEN I WAS A KID

**YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY "DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME!"
BECAUSE WE WEREN'T COMPLETE MORONS BACK THEN**

Shift in Religions

- About 7,000 years ago, farming came into being
- Religious practices were adapted to agriculture use
 - Gods “gave” humans dominion over the land and its creatures
 - This was a turning point in human history in that humans transitioned from being a part of the natural system to being anointed as suzerain over nature’s creatures
- This did not happen world-wide at once, but took hold only as agriculture spread

VARIOUS RELIGIONS

(in alphabetical order)

- Agnosticism: truth of metaphysical claims regarding the existence of a god or gods, or even ultimate reality, is unknown and may be impossible to know
- Atheism: a state of having no beliefs in gods or supernatural beings
- Animism: the attribution of a soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena
- Buddhism: A way of living based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama's Five Precepts
refrain from harming living beings; taking what is not given; sexual misconduct; harmful speech; and drink or drugs which cloud the mind.

VARIOUS RELIGIONS

(in alphabetical order)

- Christianity: Based on the teaching of Christ
 - Christian groups differ in their interpretation of his teaching, life, death and resurrection, but these matters are at the heart of the way of life of all of them
- Hinduism: An ancient tradition of related beliefs and practices that developed in the Indian subcontinent
 - Core ideals and values shared by most Hindus would include respect for elders; reverence for teachers; regard for guests and tolerance of all races and religions
- Islam: Based on the revelations of the Prophet
 - The five pillars of Islam – declaration of faith; ritual prayer; welfare; a month of fasting during Ramadan; and pilgrimage

VARIOUS RELIGIONS

(in alphabetical order)

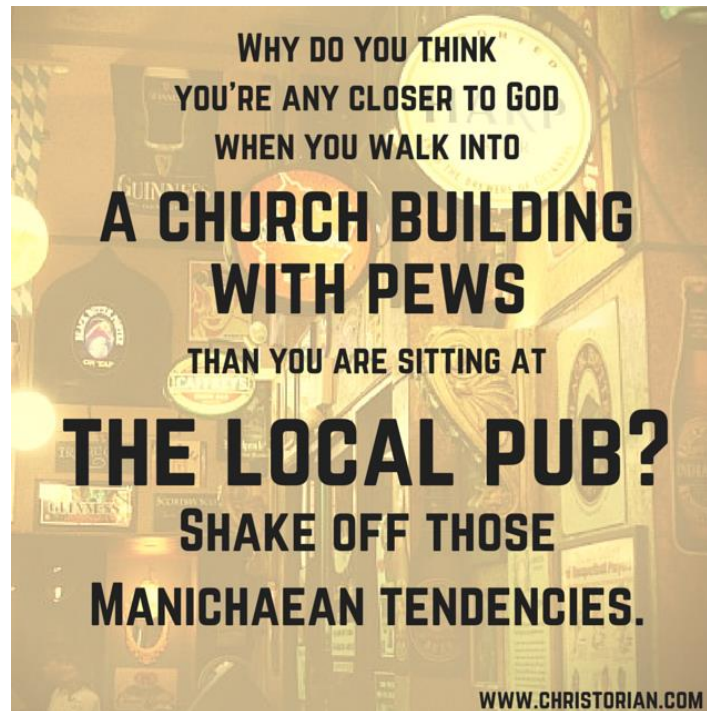
- Jainism: An ancient philosophy and ethical teaching that originated in India
 - The main principle is ahimsa – the avoidance, where possible, of physical or mental harm to any living being
 - Jainism is a religion without a belief in a creator god
- Judaism: Based around the Jewish people's covenant relationship with God
 - Jews believe they are challenged and blessed by God
 - Love of one's neighbor is the great principle of social life and the founding inspiration of the Jewish community
- Sikhism: (15th Century CE) There is one God, people should serve by leading a life of prayer and obedience
 - Sikhs believe their soul then passes through various existences and will become one with God

Rewards of Life After Death

- Not all religions promise an existence after one's mortal time on earth is over, but they all express an acceptance of the end of life
- Christianity has always had an exceptional emphasis on heaven as a place where the scales for all who live will even up the differences, with a special weight given to those who were devoted to Christ
- Islam has a concept of heaven and one of its unique features is that if one dies as a martyr, entrance to heaven is automation and instantaneous
- Both religions have a hell for those who fell short

Religion and Culture

- Western Culture became “Christian” whereas the Middle East morphed from early Christianity to Islamic culture
- These two religions share disapproving attitudes toward fun



The Three Non-Amigos

- The three major religions that originated in Southwest Asia are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- All are based on monotheism, a belief in one god
- Each religion has a sacred text, or book, which is at the core of its faith
- Each book is a collection of writings compiled over time
- None was written by the central figure of the faith

Islam vis a vis Christianity

- Protestants rely on Sola Scriptura (Bible inerrancy)
- Muslims base their beliefs on the Koran
- Latin Catholics defer to the Pope and encyclicals
 - Eastern Orthodox are more committee oriented
- In this regard, the Latin Catholic and Orthodox Christians have an historical edge on the “facts” – but it matters little any longer

Religion and Science

- All religions seem to be skeptical of science – there is little room for questioning in theocratic thought
- Christianity's first grasp of political power in the Roman Empire did not go well
 - Christians went to great effort to rid the empire of books, statues, buildings and technology
 - The burning of the library at Alexandria set science and technology back several hundred years
- Muslim society took great pains to find and preserve what it could, but Christian priests had a 400-year head start

Most of Us Live in a Christian Culture



Catholics & Protestants

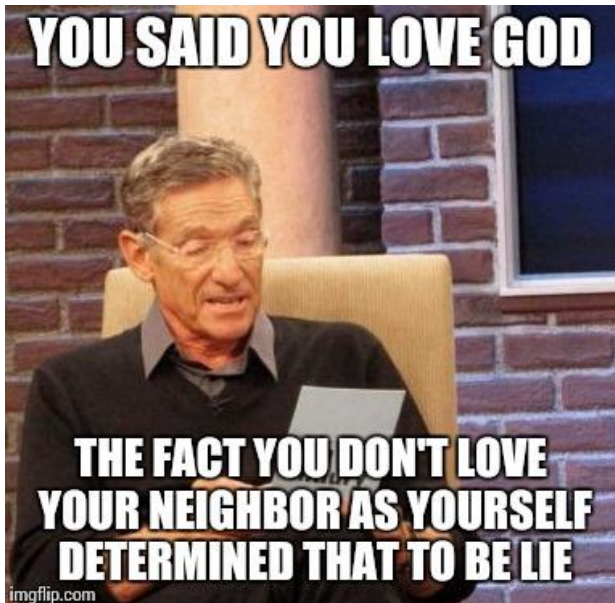
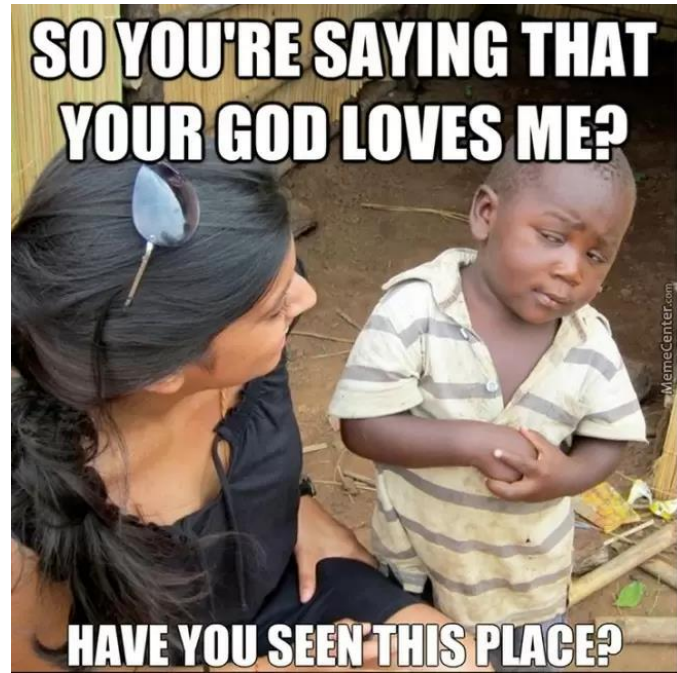
- Catholics are the biggest group and they emphasize the importance of traditions and the clergy
- Protestants are known for believing the Bible has absolute authority
 - They quote the bible a lot
 - There are always debate about how literal the bible is, whether it contradicts science, which rules are binding etc.
 - Protestants are like a spilled drop of mercury

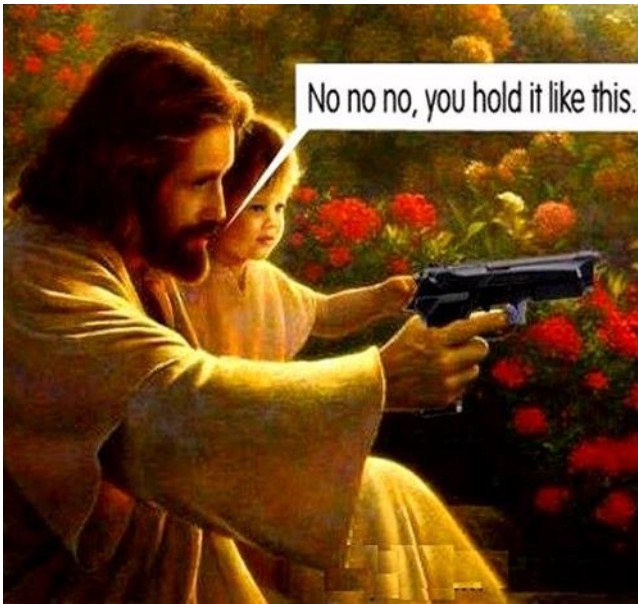
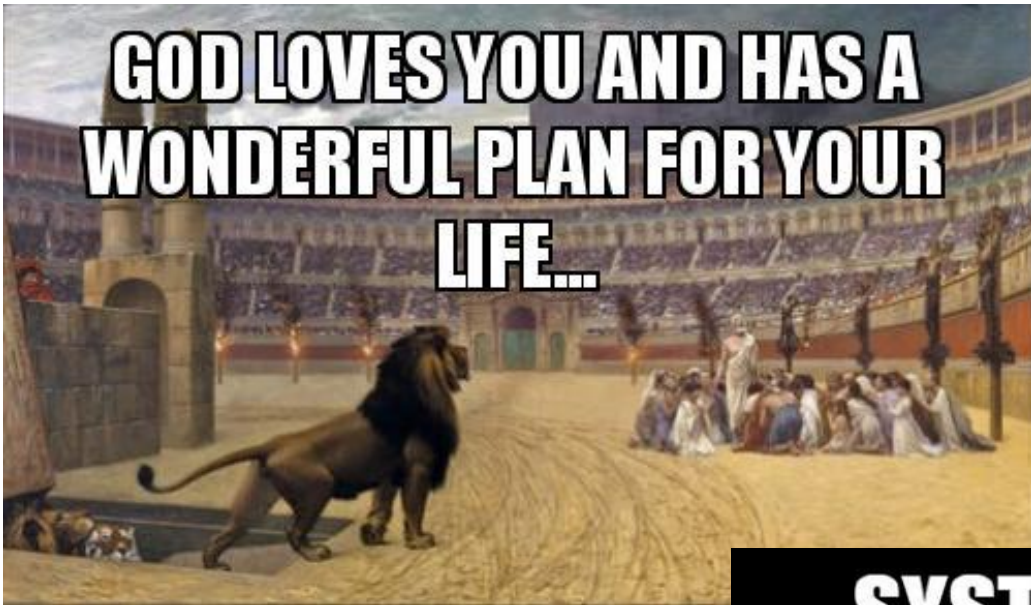
**God loves you so much
that he created hell**



**just in case you don't
love him back.**

Christopher Hitchens

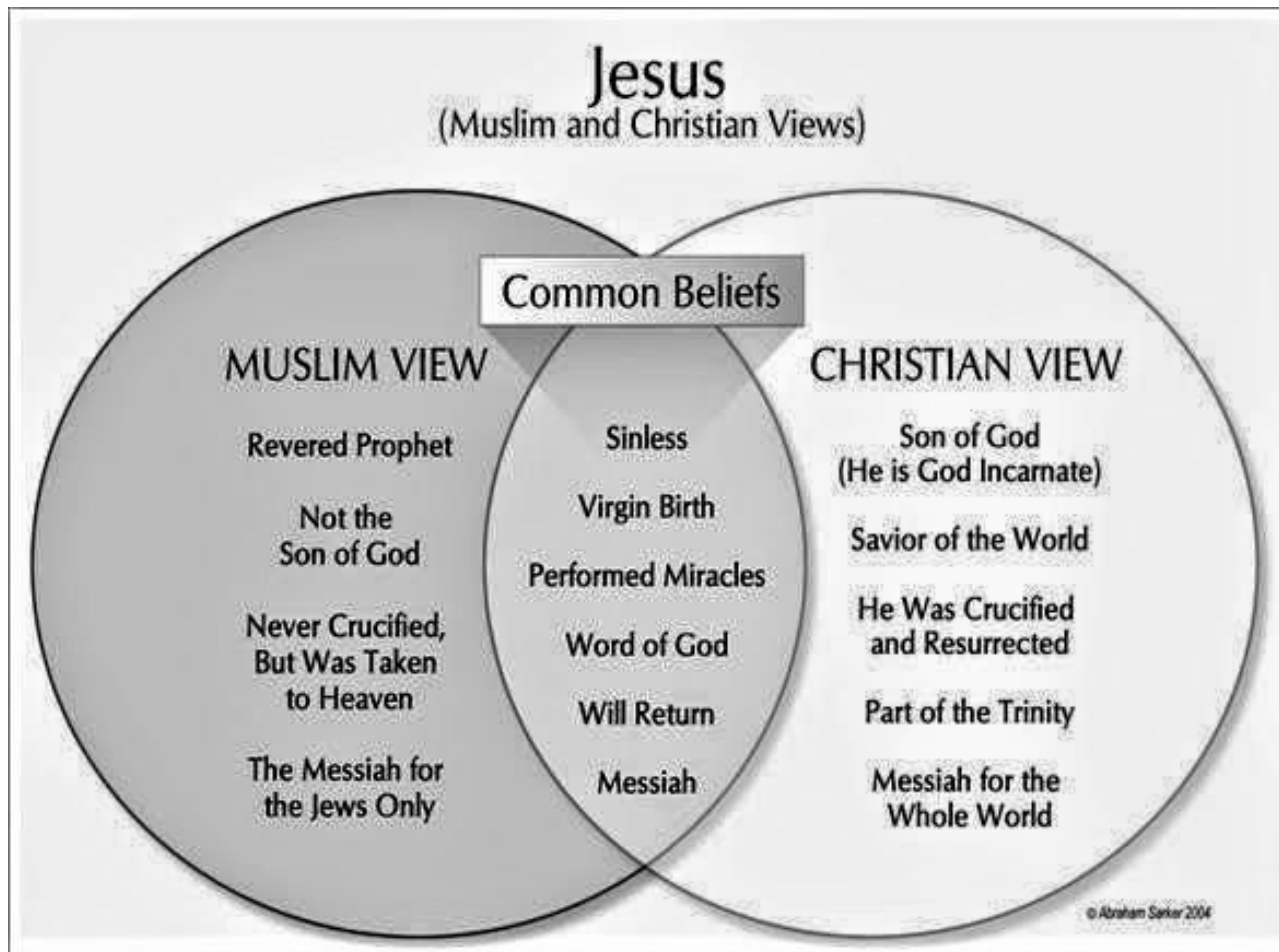




Recent Events & Islam

- Muslims have immigrated to the US for numerous reasons, most of which are related to a desire to be economically, politically and theologically free
- Until 2001, there was not a lot of public attention on this migration
- The tension is high and remains so
 - Unfortunately it is ill-informed and creates social tension

Christianity & Islam



Christianity & the U.S.A.

- As noted, Christianity looks askance on both liberal democracy and science
- This is a strong (yet not discussed) streak in American culture which few wish to address
- Christian attitudes toward science, knowledge and dissenting views of Christianity are not helping
 - Climate change denial
 - Anti-labor politics
 - Evangelical support for the hard political right
 - Anti-feminist politics

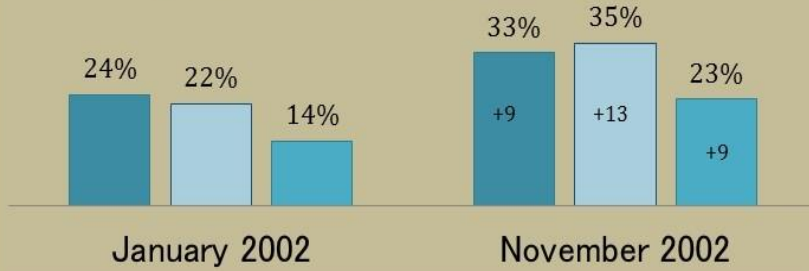
RELIGION

It's All In Your Perspective

- Islam has a very loose concept of hierarchy and no hard & fast rules about who is and who is not a religious leader
- Not unlike Baptist churches: regional biblical interpretations permit lynching while others permit illegal immigrant sanctuaries
- Islam has troublesome baggage, as does X
 - Before we ask Muslims to denounce terrorists among them, should we not do the same?
 - Do they treat women worse than Christian men do?

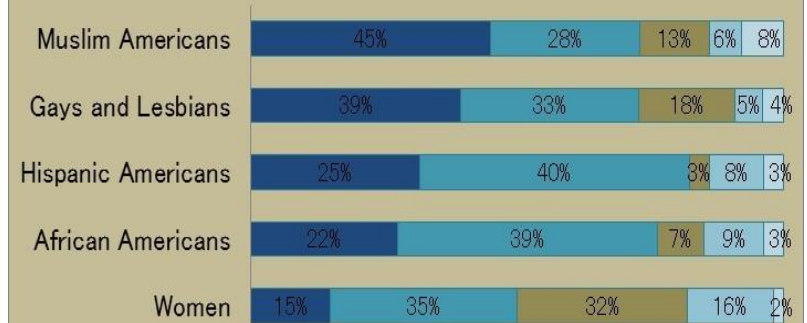
U.S. Public Views of Islam

- Unfavorable opinion of Islam
- Islam doesn't teach respect for other faiths
- Islam encourages violence



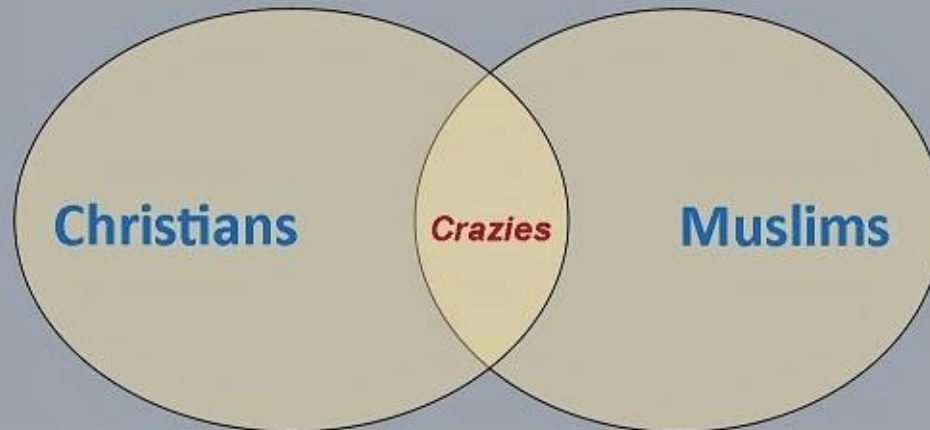
How Much Discrimination Is There Against...

- A lot
- Some
- Only a little
- None at all
- Don't Know



Are we really that different?

We both have this in common!



THE ISLAMIZATION OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM



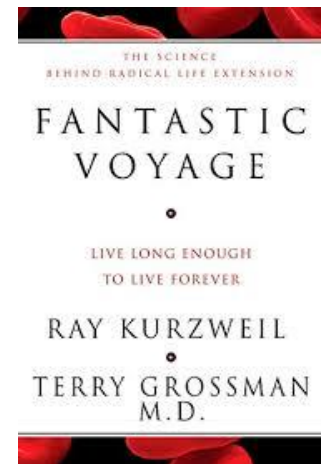
ISIS Is A Step-Child Of The Klan

- The most virulent Arab anti-Semitic actions against Middle Eastern Jews came after WW II when escaped Nazis found refuge among Muslim governments
- While Jews and Arabs did not get along all that well after WWI, the violence was sporadic
 - The Nazis institutionalized anti-semitism
- In the 1930s the Nazis sent lawyers to the US to study southern state Jim Crow laws to help them organize their own laws against Jews
 - Muslim fundamentalism draws on Jim Crow laws
- Current right-wing X groups perpetuate this unending circle of hate

Rules of American Christianity

The basic idea is that authority is justified by morality, and that, in a well-ordered world, there should be a moral hierarchy in which those who have traditionally dominated should dominate

- The “should” hierarchy is in red; the laity’s understanding is in black; and the operant rule is in blue:
- **God above Man**
 - Man above Nature
 - The Disciplined (Strong) above the Undisciplined (Weak)
- **The Church leaders above the flock**
 - Employers above Employees
 - Adults above Children
- **Christian culture above other cultures**
 - Our Country above other countries
 - Men above women
- **Christians above non-Christians**
 - Whites above Nonwhites
 - Straights above Gays



The Death of God and Redundancy of Heaven

- The heaven of old has been surpassed in many ways by the technology of our present
- Religion used to sanctify death and prepare us for it
- Religion now sanctifies life and makes being alive the be-all and end-all of moral matters
 - Extended life may obviate heaven