REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

HAVING SOWN THE WINDS OF IGNORANCE ON CANNABIS

WE STRUGGLE TO COPE WITH OPIOIDS
Medical Marijuana: Cannabinoids

- Cannabinoids are a large family of chemicals related to delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), marijuana’s main psychoactive (mind-altering) ingredient
- Besides THC, the marijuana plant contains over 100 other cannabinoids
- The body also produces its own cannabinoid chemicals (called endocannabinoids), which play a role in regulating pleasure, memory, thinking, concentration, movement, coordination, sensory and time perception, appetite, and pain
Marijuana

• 1920’s Mexican immigrants introduce recreational use of marijuana leaf
  – After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Mexican immigrants flooded into the U.S., introducing to American culture the recreational use of marijuana
  – The drug became associated with the immigrants, and fear of the Spanish-speaking newcomers became associated with marijuana

• Anti-drug campaigners warned against the encroaching "Marijuana Menace"
  – Terrible crimes were attributed to marijuana and the Mexicans who used it
Marijuana

• 1930 Creation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN)
  – By 1931, 29 states had outlawed marijuana

• 1951-56 Stricter Sentencing Laws
  – Enactment of federal laws (Boggs Act, 1952; Narcotics Control Act, 1956) which set mandatory sentences for drug-related offenses, including marijuana

• Federal law has prevented serious study of the effects of marijuana for the better part of a half-century
  – We have no in-depth knowledge of its effects
Pro Pot

• Study: Marijuana Use Not Associated With Previously Reported Changes In Brain Morphology
• THC-Positive Drivers Not More Likely To Be Involved In Motor Vehicle Crashes
• History Of Cannabis Use Associated With Reduced Cancer Risk
  – Cannabis use is inversely associated with incidences of bladder cancer in males
• Cannabis reduces nausea associated with cancer chemical treatments
• Cannabis is helpful in the treatment of glaucoma
• Pot is less dangerous to society than alcohol and hard drugs
Per ALA Tobacco vs. Marijuana

- Like tobacco smoke, marijuana smoke contains cancer-causing chemicals
  - 33 cancer-causing chemicals are contained in marijuana
  - Marijuana smoke also deposits tar into the lungs
    - All things being equal, marijuana deposits four times as much tar into the lungs
    - Marijuana joints are un-filtered and often more deeply inhaled than cigarettes
- Marijuana smokers can have many of the same respiratory problems experienced by people who smoke tobacco
  - These include coughing and phlegm production on most days, wheezing, bronchitis, and greater risk of lung infection
Marijuana Is Worse Than Tobacco

• If one is to believe the American Lung Association
• The organization was founded in 1904 to fight tuberculosis as the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis
• For certain smoking is a dangerous habit

Marijuana deposits four times more tar in the lungs than tobacco
To Vape or Not To Vape

- E-cigarettes and other vaping devices are NOT risk-free
- They contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug with known health risks
- Using e-cigarettes and other vaping products is not a proven method for quitting smoking
- E-cigarettes and other vaping devices are not used exclusively by people trying to quit smoking
- The E-cigarettes that are causing problems use oils to carry chemicals into the lungs
  - Lungs cannot deal with oil-based vapors
Religion
Part the Second

• Islam brings the Reformation’s true lessons home to America
  – The Islamization of Radical Protestantism

• Whither god; thence religion
  – Where does the advance of AI leave humans?
  – What will we worship besides money?

• What will salvation become?
• What will we become?
Islam is similar to Christianity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans: 34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestants: 26%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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Islam is fundamentally different than Christianity

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans: 44%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestants: 60%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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"When it is a question of money, everybody is of the same religion." - Voltaire

Muslims and Christians worship the same God

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<th>Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans: 46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestants: 35%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
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
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

Jesus
(Muslim and Christian Views)

**COMMON BELIEFS**

**MUSLIM VIEW**
- Revered Prophet
- Not the Son of God
- Never Crucified, But Was Taken to Heaven
- The Messiah for the Jews Only

**CHRISTIAN VIEW**
- Son of God (He is God Incarnate)
- Savior of the World
- He Was Crucified and Resurrected
- Part of the Trinity
- Messiah for the Whole World

**Sinless**
- Virgin Birth
- Performed Miracles
- Word of God
- Will Return
- Messiah
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?
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
U.S. Public Views of Islam

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

<table>
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<th>November 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>Islam's Faiths</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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How Much Discrimination Is There Against...

- Muslim Americans
  - A lot: 45%
  - Some: 28%
  - Only a little: 13%
  - None at all: 6%
  - Don't Know: 6%

- Gays and Lesbians
  - A lot: 39%
  - Some: 33%
  - Only a little: 18%
  - None at all: 5%
  - Don't Know: 4%

- Hispanic Americans
  - A lot: 25%
  - Some: 40%
  - Only a little: 3%
  - None at all: 8%
  - Don't Know: 3%

- African Americans
  - A lot: 22%
  - Some: 83%
  - Only a little: 7%
  - None at all: 9%
  - Don't Know: 3%

- Women
  - A lot: 15%
  - Some: 35%
  - Only a little: 32%
  - None at all: 15%
  - Don't Know: 2%

Are we really that different?

*We both have this in common!*

Christians

Crazies

Muslims
Which leads us to an interesting phenomenon
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
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
A New Future for Humans
God’s Power Usurped

- Homo Sapiens (wise humans) is evolving into Homo Deus (god humans) with god-like mastery over our environment and the ability to create (and destroy) life
- If and when humans develop the ability to prolong life, what happens to religion
  - Why wait for a reward in heaven when you can achieve extraordinarily long life here on earth?
  - What will be left of the sanctity of sacrifice?
Wellbeing for the Living

• Wellness and Wellbeing will Dominate
  – With problems of human survival (pandemics, famine and violence) solved, humans will increasingly focus on the god-like pursuits of chasing immortality (wellness) and enduring happiness (wellbeing)

• With the focus on life and the extension thereof, what happens to rituals focused on the sanctity of death?
The Death of Humanism

• Humanism celebrating human intelligence, experience and values will be eroded by advances in science and technology
  – Science will challenge human superiority and human exceptionalism implicit in humanism
  – This will include beliefs in the uniqueness of human sentience (feelings), human sapience (reason) and free-will

• Our science will prove that we are just animals with a god-complex
The Rise of Techno-Humanism

• In the pursuit of immortality and happiness, will humans turn to technology to upgrade our biological (genetic), cyborg (bionic) and computer (AI) selves?

• Non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms will know us better than we know ourselves, and we will increasing rely on AI algorithms to inform and guide us in life, love and work

• What will become of free will?
AI & Love

• Will Algorithms learn that humans are sets of algorithms that can be used to predict and explain behavior?
  – AI sees humans simply as organisms i.e.: ‘if this, then that’ algorithms coded for desires, personality, passions and whatever else the programmer wishes to encode
  – Match.com on steroids

• Where will we draw a line on AI algorithms to inform and guide us in life, love and work?
  – Will such programs be hacked?
The Internet of All Things
(AKA The Matrix)

• If humanity adopts an AI which considers humans as a data-processing system, we will be merely an obsolete, less efficient data-processing system
  – A replaceable unit it the internet of all things
  – Once this mission is accomplished, Homo sapiens will be an excessive carrying cost going forward

• The next step in evolution could very well see humans transform from semi-evolved simians into pure information
  – We will go from block-chain life to blockhead enchained lives
The Rise of the “Useless Class”

- The cost of upgrading the human condition will be expensive and reserved for a tiny elite
- The masses will see jobs disappear as they are replaced by ever more effective and ever more efficient technology
  - Unlike the lumpen proletariat of yesteryear, the new “useless class” will not even be able to sell their labor
Religion of the Future

• The religion of Humanism will be replaced by a new religion “Dataism”, as we replace a homo-centric world view in favor of a data-centric world view

• Facebook, Google and Netflix already treat life as data processing
  – Our value to this socio-economic reality will value human life in terms our collective data
  – Data to which we do not have access; not unlike primitive humans lived in an environment in which they had no access to data
What Happens to Pets That Drop Out of Favor?
The Death of God and Redundancy of Heaven

• Heaven will be replaced by our technology
  – 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

• The irony of this is that peasants abandoned the Norse religion because it wound up as a intensifier of the upper class
  – Only those with money and power could enjoy Valhalla
  – Everyone else went to a low-rent version of eternity
What Replaces Current Religions?
Questions for the Religious

• Are organisms just algorithms, and is life really just data processing?
  – Maybe not, but can others control us with the ability to manipulate our desires?

• Is intelligence more valuable than consciousness?

• Can non-conscious, but highly intelligent algorithms really know us better than we know ourselves?

• These will be decided as a matter of fact, rather than as a matter of opinion
Future of Our Religious Realities

• In a data-driven world where numbers rule and opinions walk, what will be the purpose of religious thought?
• The great majority of “religious” minded people are not spending time on the changes we are experiencing, yet our future is no longer in our own hands if we do not exercise control over these entities
Religion from A Different Perspective

• The very concept of sin comes from religion
  – Religion solves a problem of its own making

• Would you be thankful to someone who cut you with a knife in order to sell you a bandage?

Dan Barker