

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

World Religion and History

By Ben Huot

www.benjamin-newton.com

January 8, 2025

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

No License.....	3
World History.....	4
A Theme of History.....	5
No Systems.....	11
Protestant History.....	14
Long Term Church History.....	15
Unresolved.....	20
Quaker Roots.....	25
Chinese Philosophy.....	29
Lifestyle Paradox.....	30
Defense of Taoism.....	34
Inter-Faith Issues.....	40
Mixing Beliefs.....	41
Christianity, Paganism, and History.....	44
America Never was Christian.....	52

No License

Do Not Edit
Do Not Copy
Do Not Distribute

Copyright 2025
Ben Huot
All Rights Reserved

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

World History

A Theme of History

The Problem

Throughout history, there is a re-occurring cross-cultural theme where those who have are robbed of their wealth on a large scale by those who have little to nothing. The question to me is not whether it is ethical, as I have no control over it, but how does one adequately defend the things they have created or acquired? In this case, most of us in America are in the same boat.

Oftentimes this takes the form of what they then called barbarians coming in and destroying the rich farmlands and then retreating back into mountainous, deserted, waterways, or forested areas quickly. For historical examples, you have the Goths, Vikings, Mongols, and pirates. For modern examples, we have school shootings, malicious hacking, and terrorism.

Often times a small group of people can dominate a society and take its wealth, because they have nothing to defend. Defense is always more difficult, because you have to defend everything and the attacker only has to attack the targets they select before hand. Sometimes some of the big advantages of the attacker is speed. Many times it is hard to locate the group at any one time, and, if you do there is little to take from them.

Today our society is set up to recreate this same dynamic, by having such a wealth gap in our world civilization. In addition, we keep on allowing our tools for war to spread into the hands of people, who do not care for who we are. Furthermore, in our efforts to control all of society further motivate outsiders to strike back harder and more often.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

One of the things inspiring these attacks are that we portray ourselves as better than everyone else morally. Then we later find out that so much of our economic success is caused by the exploitation of others and their wealth. It is hard to say one thing and do another and not have people hear what you are doing more loudly.

Many people cannot prove in a court of law what is happening, because so much of it is classified. But we do know these things are happening and we feel morally compelled to do something about it. I do not believe that the ends justify the means, but both the attacker and defender in this case do.

Most people are not aware of it, but we have had a full scale world war going on for at least 10 years. Every major country and world power is participating. Right now it is a fairly cold war, without people killing each other directly, but that will likely come too in the near future. Some of the biggest casualties are local schools, local governments, and hospitals in rural and inner city locations, in the United States and around the world.

The attack looks like the following concept. The predators pick off the weakest in the herd and the herd doesn't realize one was taken until they stop running. This can go on indefinitely, but it will eventually reach the scale, where everyone will realize that this is a problem. Then we will be in a very deep mess.

How they could solve this

Any easy way to stop it is to outlaw hacking internationally as a war crime. More importantly, make a public treaty between all these nations that we all, including us, stop hacking each other.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Follow this up with a notice that any digital attack will be met with a conventional or nuclear attack.

Basically we are in the process of destabilizing the world, by allowing spy technologies and techniques become both an integral part of the culture and economy of our own country and let it spread to other countries. It is like the proliferation of nuclear weapons that we have taken so seriously and have prevented much of the literal fallout we could have had.

Today our entire economy is based on gathering the information of common people without their consent or ability to refuse from both a technical and practical standpoint.

In such an economy, covert actions of any type are very ineffective, because you cannot hide things very well, when anyone can report something. Basically, the only way you can keep things secret, for any length of time, is to not put them online or in digital form (but this is changing rapidly as well). So effectively, not only do we have no privacy, but neither do the classified elements of our national infrastructure.

Therefore there is no net gain, in further conducting electronic surveillance or doing any covert actions. We can and should learn about the rest of the world and repurpose our clandestine forces to do similar work as we think of the State Department doing. We, as a nation, in one of our government agencies, need to learn other world languages and read local news in the native language. Open source revolutionized the software industry and it could do so as well in the classified agencies. In this case, the information source is open rather than the software or the end analysis.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

So we need not worry about compromising national security, in ceasing to antagonize other nations and proliferate classified tools, by being as China calls us - a nation of hackers.

What we can do

So obviously people in the position to change this have already chosen to ignore this idea and continue on full speed in a reckless manner. I have a hard time believing they hadn't thought of the same idea well before I am writing about it today. But for individuals, what can we do? Do fight this and don't just give up, because the information will be used against you and the wealthy don't care yet.

Rely as little as possible on technology and specifically on where things get more automated and easier for us but more complicated for the computer. These types of technology are notoriously completely reliant on outside infrastructure and expertise to work perfectly every time or else you lose something important.

Keep the complexity down and learn everything you can about things, especially the history of computing. Understand basic things like the number of errors in code is always more for products with more users, but that is because more of them have been reported. Use as simple a method as you can for important things like security tools and backups (in terms of complicated for the computer to do, not you).

Be aware of what is going on in the computing world and have some security common sense. Realize that the news only reports on divisive things and most hackers are seeking things that make people look bad. There is nowhere to hide anything and doing so

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

will make you look more like an attractive target. Once something becomes common enough it is no longer reported on, even though it is likely still very important to be aware of.

Understand basic things about business trends, like that businesses are optimized for what is cheapest in the short time and no other considerations are made. Once someone has sold you something, they have no interest in you. Be wary of things that are too cheap or too easy.

There is always a cost to everything. Businesses don't like working with you anymore than you like working with them. People are annoying and hard to work with and this won't change in a positive way anytime soon.

Don't trust encryption, because we are all dependent on prime numbers being random for almost all encryption. If and when this is found to have a pattern, we get significantly more processing power, or your hardware and software age, nothing can be effectively protected that way. This is also true even when smart people make great security products with few errors and a good design and keep it up to date.

The big takeaway from this is to learn about our world today and our world today is run on machines. We need to learn as much as possible about important computer developments and keep up to date on them as the situation evolves rapidly. But also read about computer history, because you will need to understand basic concepts and, as we all know, history repeats itself.

Today your valuables may be safer in your own house than being accessible digitally. This is something to consider to understand the gravity of digital security. What makes something easy for

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

you makes it easier for the hacker as well. Most developing security technologies help the attacker as much as the defender.

No Systems

One of the many things that is just assumed about Christian theology is that it should be studied systematically or by topic. The problem with this is that it isn't organized that way. The Bible is not a legal code, a bullet point list, or an infographic. It is literature.

It is objectively true literature about theological ideas, including sin and God, but it is still literature. I don't think scripture was designed this way by accident, or solely because things were written differently during ancient times. The Bible is literature, both to inspire and humble God's people throughout history.

Another thing we assume about the Bible is that our culture is typical of most the world today, or most of the world of the past or future. We live in a very unsustainable society, which is running through resources so fast, it is unlikely to be recognizable a hundred years from now. Likely, the only part of the world that will be inhabitable will be Canada.

Some of our ideas today were invented long ago, but our uses of them were either not economical viable in their cultures, or they were rejected on moral grounds. We measure our success by what we call freedoms, which are another way of saying we are wealthy.

Science is not the ultimate way to solve problems. It is just in fashion today. One of the earliest scientists was considered heretical, by at least the Western Church, for half of Church history. The adding of his ideas to the church doctrine is likely what led to modern atheism. The Enlightenment was based on

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

scholars reading ancient Greek and Roman writings and reintroducing them into Western Civilization.

Looking at English and British history, it is likely there was a concerted effort about a millennium ago, to bring advanced technology into the world. There are too many lucky turning points, in English and British history, to explain by chance. England was also the location of the Industrial Revolution, because it had the only economy where this kind of technology was economically useful, at the time of its introduction.

The Information Revolution is based on all the ideas and technologies of the Industrial Revolution. Computers require a scale of manufacturing never attempted before in history. Machines basically make other machines and eventually they will literally program themselves, if the industry can pull that off. This is why we do not have family wage jobs in America making computers.

We will never get past the ideas of colonialism / capitalism, because that is inherent in the world system, that makes the current level of technology possible. This is likely why many of our adversaries deliberately try to defeat us using lower level technology weapons. Capitalism is about taking in cheap raw materials and making luxury items, with a huge markup. Even simple household items like dishes are designed with that same concept.

We are seeing the problems with what Science has brought into the world, but we seldom hear about the success of the Agricultural Revolution. When people had their own farms, they were much more self sufficient, crime was much lower as it was very inefficient, and most people were busy enough doing work,

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

to keep themselves out of trouble. Today we live in a culture of entertainment, because we have too much time on our hands and we do not value education.

So one of our problems today is we are all in a rush to do everything. Jesus was very relaxed most of the time and when He was stressed out, He would go by Himself to pray to His Father. He had good self esteem, because He knew He was God and what Heaven is like.

Jesus knew even if every person rejected Him, He still had a huge number of angels, who would drop everything to save Him, no matter what the cost. He knew He was loved by His Father who loved Him, in a way only a perfect father could.

Jesus was offered shortcuts by the devil several times, but He was patient to wait for the right time and place. He even had the self control to be silent, when saying even a few words would likely have saved Him from the cross. Jesus may have had times when He experienced joy on earth, but He chose a time and place to live among us where there was little time, money, or energy for entertainment.

Our culture has more in common with that of the Anti-Christ than that of God. When you follow God, at least you get a chance to rest. We can thank God for inventing the day off work concept. A city that never sleeps is not a place of peace.

Protestant History

Long Term Church History

Early Church Organization

Many people think that the Catholic Church was the earliest Church but according to historical record that would be either the Coptic or Syriac Church. There were originally supposed to be different churches, according to the major cities arranged geographically. Rome was the least important at first and only chosen because it was the western imperial capitol. The other major centers were in Antioch because it was an important commercial center, Alexandria because it was an important educational center and Constantinople because it was the more important eastern capitol of the Roman Empire (with Jerusalem being a merely symbolic one).

The Church of the East was centered near modern day Baghdad as it was the capitol of the Persian Empire. Because of rivalry between the Persian and Roman Empires, tolerance for Christianity in Iran would only exist if they made a clean break with the Church in the Roman Empire. They had to make up a heresy to do so and that is why they are not represented in some of the early church councils. Recently the Catholic Pope apologized to these Oriental Orthodox churches and admitted that they were doctrinally correct and the differences came from different explanations for the same doctrine (the Trinity) in different languages.

The Middle East was the center of most of Christianity, until the time of the Crusades. This was the halfway point in the history of Christianity. Doctrine was supposed to be determined by councils, with a representatives from each of the regional

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

churches. The Protestants did not exist, until about the time of the Renaissance - the 3/4 point of Church history. Similar to today, politics and religion were inseparable in a practical and public sense. A lot of things were changing at the time and the Church was too powerful and became corrupt about the time of the Crusades.

Overview of Reformation

The Protestant Reformation was only part of a much longer struggle to reform the Church that started at the time of the Franciscan order (started by Saint Francis). There were struggles within the Protestant church up until about the 1990s to continue to further define what the church should be and what relationship the leaders and members were to have with each other and God. Along the way, there were major battles with Islam, Catholicism, and other Protestants that were sometimes full wars and sometimes mostly institutional, spiritual, or political conflicts.

There is a recurring theme within the Protestant Churches about trying to be just like the Church at the time of the New Testament. It is hard to get much information on this time period in Church history outside of the Bible because of the intense persecution. What we do know from the Letters to the Churches from Paul and the other Apostles is that most of the same problems we have today in the Church were also problems at that time as well.

The issues the Protestants brought up look like issues relevant for their time and place in geography and history. It made the Church powerful enough to survive against the major Islamic empires of the Early Modern World and later Modern Atheism which came out of the European Enlightenment. It is very

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

important to stick to the fundamentals and at the same time adopt as many cultural elements that are consistent with the Gospel message.

The Reformation was successful, unlike other similar reform movements because there was a long standing feud between the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope. The pope was called the anti Christ as early as 1200 AD centuries before being described that way by Reformation leaders. France at the time was fighting for its very existence and the real power in Europe was with the Habsburgs not the Pope.

Reformation Politics

The Habsburgs controlled at one time all of both the Spanish and Portuguese Empires at their height, as well as what is now Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Belgium. The French made three major decisions to deal with this. They funded the Protestant movement in the Holy Roman Empire, they made an alliance with the Ottoman Empire, and they made most of the Protestants in France leave, many of which ended up in British and Dutch colonies.

One of the reasons why the English and Dutch both did so well is that they united for over a hundred years. The Dutch managed to pull the Portuguese into the biggest religious war ever so that they took some of the best parts of the Portuguese colonies including South Africa and the Indonesia (the spice islands). The Dutch and English avoided many wars in Europe and controlled their finances better. If these things and many more very lucky things hadn't happened at just the right times there is no way the British would ever have become a world power.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Money and wars are very related as most the money in governments has traditionally been spent on wars. At the same time that France allied with the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Empire was invading Europe from the other side. A coalition of mostly Catholic armies from the Habsburgs Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth held them back over hundreds of years. Ivan the Terrible and Vlad the Impaler were very helpful as well. At two different times, the Ottoman Empire laid siege to Vienna, which was the eastern capitol of the Habsburg Empire. The next logical country to invade would be France.

There were many major wars between the Protestants and Catholics until the 19th century when Napoleon destroyed the Catholic Church by looting all its money from Europe to finance his campaign to destroy Spain and Portugal and create modern Germany and Italy. At the end of the Napoleon Wars, the Austrian Habsburgs convinced the British that a cease fire between European countries would be best for everyone in Europe. The peace broke as World War 1 started.

Since then some missionaries mostly from the United States and the United Kingdom spread the Gospel to several former slaves and then they brought the Gospel to millions in Africa. Today, the center of the future church is in Africa and Asia. There are now missionaries going back to Europe to reintroduce the Gospel to the some of the same countries that brought the Gospel to them. Ironically, the little left of the Church in Europe is mostly Catholic. Also the biggest Churches in Africa are not Evangelical or Pentecostal but independent of major Western denominations as well as a large number being Catholic or Anglican.

Reformation Doctrine

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Doctrinally the major differences between most Protestant and most Catholics historically has been related to the fact that the Catholic Church had inherited a lot of cultural things from the Roman Empire that were no longer relevant to Northern Europe. The Roman Empire was notorious for never compromising, it was very elitist, and was very patriotic. Translating the Bible to the emerging languages of the what would be the dominant World Powers for the next several hundreds years helped make these countries independent of each other.

Getting rid of the previous bureaucracy allowed them to further distance themselves from other rival powers and win friends with the local population and inspire patriotism to get more conscripts to fight in their wars. By making the faith an inward and personal one they were no longer bound by what someone in Rome told them to do. They could continue to then make changes indefinitely, without having to be bound by previous decisions by starting new churches.

So what is a good Christian to do about this? Learn your culture well and understand the Bible well. Combine them in appropriate ways. Traditions are good but they should not become more important than the Bible.

You can only go so far with doctrines developed by different churches. Pray frequently, get involved in the Church, study the Bible, spread the Gospel, help people in need and define your faith through action. Let God be your Lord and let Him make you into a better person.

Unresolved

About five centuries ago, the modern world started. This was the first successful challenge to the power of the Hapsburgs, in religious issues.

After the success of the Crusades, the power of the Pope was so unilateral and unchallenged that they did things I think that they would later regret. The period of reform goes back to the time of at least Saint Francis of Assisi. Most of the reforms the Roman Catholic Church tried to wipe out, by killing everyone, as they saw it as a revolt and heretical.

By the time of the Protestant Reformation, the Hapsburgs were the big world power everyone else wanted to defeat. They included the entire empires of both Spain and Portugal, which included most of the tropics around the entire world, as well as big parts of modern Belgium, Germany, Southeastern Europe, and Italy, at one time.

This was around the time, when the armies of central and eastern Christian Europe combined and finally found some success against the most powerful Islamic Empire of the time, called the Ottoman Empire. This empire covered most of what we now think of as the Arab world. They actually did not become mostly Arab and Muslim, until the early 20th century though.

The real instability occurred, when France decided they did not want to be part of the Habsburg Empire. To achieve this, they decided to ally themselves with the Ottoman Empire. France decided to fund the new Protestant movement, in what is now

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

called Germany. At the same time, the French persecuted their own people, who converted to Protestantism.

After fighting a number of wars, some world wide, the French finally agreed to stop interfering in the internal affairs of the Holy Roman Empire, in what is now Germany. The other end of the deal was that the Hapsburgs were to let those in this Pre-German area choose to be a variant of Protestantism. This was only on the condition that local rulers had previously converted first. This is the very first treaty of what later became the legal basis of modern international law. This was the start of what we call things like human rights.

The theological explanations are all over the map and the exact issues are not interesting, to most people today. Suffice it to say, they are essential irresolvable issues. One of the major issues is the interpretation of Scripture. Many people, on both sides, felt very strongly about this. They decided to confess their beliefs in public, knowing full well that they would be executed the next day for it.

The Churches basically were at each others throats, until the time of Napoleon. Napoleon was a dictator who ruled France, because after the French Revolution was finished killing their king and queen, they could not agree on anything.

Napoleon hated the Catholic Church. He looted it to fund his war campaigns. He also set the course for the founding of modern Germany and modern Italy. Additionally, he finished off the Spanish and Portuguese empires, that were already weak by then, both directly and indirectly.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

After he was defeated, the eastern half of the Hapsburgs empire ended up being weak. They were in this position, because they lost the other half of their Empire, about a hundred years earlier. They decided to stop marrying outside the family, so they didn't have to give up power to foreign rulers. They ended up losing the Spanish Empire part to France basically.

So the big powers still left in Europe, with substantial armies, were the British and what was left of the Habsburg Empire. So the Hapsburgs strategy was to shift alliances and make peace with former enemies. This decision allowed them to avoid having to fight more than one country at a time.

So they made this peace treaty with the British, that all of Europe honored, until World War I. This was the height of the British, French, German, and Italian empires. These countries basically took over the areas of the Arab and Muslim world and their areas of influence from Africa to Southeast Asia, because those empires became weak. This all happened in a very short amount of time. Around this time, there were about 5 major revolutions including the French, American, Enlightenment, scientific, and romantic.

This all lead to nationalism and World War II, where Europe finished destroying what was left after World War I and they lost their empires. History textbooks of most countries divide themselves into 3 sections. Before the 19th century, the period up to 1945, and after 1945. These correspond to the major technology revolutions.

This history goes back to Christianity getting involved in politics, which I think is a mistake. At the onset of the Middle Ages, Western Europe ended up joining together Church and state, to solve a very obvious problem then. The churches in the east

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

ended up being terribly persecuted. The common factors are that they both got involved in politics. They were then manipulated to give one group in power justification for their policies.

So the problem is that the Church wants to have unity, while maintaining a certain set of doctrines. One of the big challenges, that may just not be possible, unless we radically change how we look at Scripture, is that you cannot have unity and consistent doctrines over time. This goes back to how the Bible is written more in a literary style than a legal document.

Part of the problem is that we look at it in a culture that is anti-intellectual, anti-supernatural, and very political. What did God intend though?

I personally think that God wanted to force us to decide to fully embrace His ideas or entirely reject them. I think we are going through an existential crisis as a Church, a world culture, and in the minds of every person on the planet. I think God is a romantic at heart.

I do not believe God will come back in my lifetime, though. I think that God uses forces that do not correspond, to political parties. He uses weather, economics, and technology, to drive change in cultures and in individual people's lives.

Many people, in a small part of the world, believe God is irrelevant to them, but most of the world today and almost all of the world throughout history strongly disagree.

I believe that religion is already becoming more influential in America today, in the mainstreaming of feminism and science

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

fiction. I do not believe it follows party lines though. The most popular idea in politics today is to not vote.

Quaker Roots

It might surprise some people, since I served in the military, but I am actually a special kind of Quaker (they call themselves Friends, as Jesus calls us in the Gospels, because we know more of His plans than in the Old Testament). I still have a copy of my dog tags, which are labelled "Protestant - Other" as there are few Quakers in the military.

Ironically, I won a national peace essay contest for my state, in high school, not long before I signed up for the military. There are actually a large minority of Quakers who are not pacifists. Personally, I think the well being of animals is more important than that of people. After all, God created them too and they behave much better than we do.

Some of the ideas of Quakers would be very refreshing to many non-believers today but frustrating to many believers. Quakers are very minimalistic and they avoid rituals to the point that they often do not put crosses on their churches. They have a silent time instead of communion and do not do physical baptism.

Anyone can be a registered minister. People are encouraged to stand up during the quiet time and say something they believe God communicated to them. They also believe strongly in getting involved in social causes.

Part of the tradition, that is not spelled out exactly, is that Quakers value humility. I don't remember anyone saying that directly, but I know I was obsessed with it for many years. This church was where I think I got the idea.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

This particular brand of Quakers were what many people call evangelical. This meant to them that they believed in the fundamentals of the faith. These include the Bible being literally true, including the supernatural elements.

So there were people there from many different backgrounds and many different ideas about what it means to be a Christian. Our family started there originally because they had a very good youth program.

This is also where I first understood the concept of paradox and this was reinforced by what I experienced in the military, as well. I was not happy with the attitude of what I saw much of the American church, especially politically. I sought a different way to be Christian.

There is a long tradition in Christianity to emulate the early Church. There has been a long held belief that we lost our understanding of the Bible along the way and we became morally corrupt. There is also a strong emphasis on studying the culture of the Middle East during ancient times. This helps us understand the context of what was said and what was assumed people understood.

One of the big differences is like most traditional cultures, the ancient Middle East valued community and continuity of values more than we now do. We, on the other hand, keep trying to adopt the latest gadgets and try to all start our own trends. There are advantages and disadvantages to both individuality and communally focused cultures. It is just that Americans tend to take things to extremes.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

One extreme on the individuality spectrum in Protestant Christianity is the Quaker faith. Ultimately they give the believer a huge amount of freedom in how they want to interpret Scripture. This is the exact opposite approach of the traditional regional churches in Asia, Africa, and Europe, one of which is the Roman Catholic Church.

There were a lot of cultural and political issues that brought about the success of what we commonly refer to as the Protestant Reformation in Continental Europe and Britain. Some of these ideas include more regional government, having elected officials both in the Church and government, radical changes in worship like using the local languages, and having every believer be their own theologian. As a side effect, some of these changes helped build the foundations of America, the British and Dutch Empires, and modern Germany.

This all pushed us into the modern world, the ideas of which go back to the European Reformation and Enlightenment. This happened long before most the technologies of the modern world were developed. A lot of this has to do with technologies of ocean navigation technologies, small changes in weather patterns and the climate, the speed at which all this happened, and the ease at which Europe and America could get people to work very hard and buy more things.

Basically, the Europeans managed to leverage their navies and the Americas to disrupt the trade routes dominated by the wealthy and powerful Muslim (Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal) dynasties across South Asia and Eastern Europe.

The turning point was the second siege of Vienna, at about 1700 AD, when guns became reliable enough to be useful in combat.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

What we call discipline in the military was invented and then perfected by the Prussia (later became modern Germany). This discipline was what made European armies more effective with gun based combat than the Muslim empires.

If you haven't noticed, I am not a fan of unrestricted capitalism. This is also known as the modern world system, which I consider to be Mystery Babylon (the evil end times empire run by the devil). I believe we should take a cue from the Amish and revert to an earlier level of technology.

This decision will save us from descending into another stone age. We would also need to restrict the usage or development of technology. This is a concept called Agrarianism which was adopted by the variation of Confucianism that Chinese government officially adopted later in Imperial Chinese history.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Chinese Philosophy

Lifestyle Paradox

One of my earlier writings is a book I wrote about psychology. I realized then that not only are there people with opposite problems, but also that they have poor self knowledge specifically with regard to this. Specifically that some people's problem is that they work too much and for others they are too lazy.

The key to dealing with this is realizing that we do not have the perspective to diagnose ourselves. The busy think they should be busier and those who don't care think they care too much. You will get a more useful direction from people close to you.

So keep that in mind when talking about getting burned out and how to avoid it. Some of the things I advise may be the exact opposite of what some people need to do. I am writing for the workaholic type A personality.

I spent about 12 years independently studying Asian and European philosophy and religion. I was attempting to find a way to make Christianity more authentic. I attempted to do this by seeing religion from an Asian and African perspective.

One of the big surprises to me, late in my studies, was that Christianity has always been a world religion. Early Christianity was actually centered (population wise) in what is now Iraq. This church was sometimes referred to as the Church in Babylon. This church literally was headquartered there as it was the capitol of the Persian Empire. This lasted for the entire first millennium of church history.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

One of the authors I read on this topic found this out by measuring how many church leaders there were and knowing how many people this would make in their congregations. Then he derived the total population of Christians based on this formulaic way they divided up the members of the Church of the East (East Syriac).

Another thing I found out in my studies early on is that Philosophical Taoism (the Zen in Zen Buddhism) and Christian Existentialism were at the heart of the Gospel. This was also in a way that was compatible with a literal understanding of the fundamentals of the Bible.

The main idea of Philosophical Taoism as it evolved over time in Chinese history was its yin and yang relationship with Confucianism. When the Jesuit Catholic Priests first brought the Gospel to China on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, they quickly synchronized this with Confucianism, but did not do so with Taoism.

Part of this is a confusion made by cultural misunderstandings and the fact that there are two entirely different forms of Taoism. Originally, Philosophical Taoism came from the ideas of the I Ching, with the religious elements removed. Later, Religious Taoism evolved into a form of elaborate traditional Chinese folk religion or a form of animism (shamanism).

There was in China, like in many countries, state belief systems and there were also folk traditions of the general population of peasants. When you study Traditional Chinese Philosophy, you usually study pure philosophy without any religious elements. But most people, who were not in the leadership, practiced the Traditional Chinese Religion.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

So the main reason for my interest in Chinese philosophy is that I am, in ancient Chinese terms, a Confucian by temperament, in that I am a type A workaholic personality. Philosophical Taoism evolved into a private and non political way of expressing feelings and creating artwork and literature for the ruling class. Confucianism never dealt with anything outside of public ceremonies and manners.

The traditional Chinese emperor controlled all land and assets in China and selected the officials who would administrate it on their behalf. They did this by a way of an imperial examination in which they wrote poetry to promote Confucian ideals.

So when some scholars scored low or failed their imperial exam, they often retreated into the rural areas to live like monks. They then adopted Taoism as a kind of counter culture movement, but they were never political about it.

Some of the main ideas of Philosophical Taoism are: being unimportant in social status, avoiding politics or hierarchy of any kind, skepticism, a belief of evil coming from culture rather than nature, and a very vague understanding of their being supernatural aspects to life. Basically Taoism was for those burned out Confucian scholar officials.

Tai Chi, Acupuncture, Kung Fu, tea ceremonies, meditation, calligraphy, and poetry are all applications of Philosophical Taoism. If you practice any of these, you are using the concept of Qi, which is the basis for any of these traditional Chinese practices and philosophies. Qi is the fundamental building block of both matter and spirit. It is what joins together the body and

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

mind. Its relationship to religion is like science is in our modern culture.

Defense of Taoism

Finding Similarities not Synchronism

My Defense

I have united the major philosophical schools of Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism although I still am a born again Bible believing Christian. This is a defense of my philosophy, my studies, and writing for several decades. I do not care what you think but I think it worthwhile to explain as it brings up some important problems in the church which come up naturally in a serious defense of my position.

I believed that it is hard to say that Christianity is the best religion if you have not read, understand, respect, and learned from other belief systems. So I studied and wrote about major world belief systems for several decades. I believe this has made me a better Christian as my faith is stronger and I am not easily swayed by hearing about challenges to my faith.

I never practiced any religion other than Christianity and I never considered giving up my faith or converting to another religion. I think Philosophical Taoism is a closer fit for Christianity than the Enlightenment or ancient Greek thinkers like Aristotle and Plato.

My unique perspective can be described as being Taoist philosophically but I never changed my theological or philosophical views. It just describes how my mind and personality naturally understand the world in technical terms.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

I have found similar ethics to Christianity in Philosophical Taoism. Furthermore many ideas that I previously believed like paradoxical interpretations of Scripture where I believe in both sides of most major splits in the Church can be explained better through Taoist concepts.

It makes Christians seem willfully ignorant, intellectually lazy, and open to all sorts of bad doctrine to not study philosophy. This is an American and somewhat European thing, not historically a Christian thing. Christians studied other cultures and other belief systems for evangelical and cultural reasons for centuries.

Furthermore it is almost impossible to study Asian history without studying religion and philosophy as the exact same writings often are classics in many different academic disciplines. I first studied Taoism in a college level Chinese Literature class.

Technical Details

Philosophical Taoism is not about a road to heaven and is not meant to be a religion. It is a revival of an earlier method of ruling China, a system of ethics based on humility and compassion, and takes the philosophy of the I Ching minus the religious aspects.

It is considered acceptable to take the parts you like of an Indian or Chinese Philosophy or Religion but not other parts you don't like. This concept forms the basis of well know and respected belief systems like Zen Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, Sikhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and many aspects of Hinduism after the Vedas.

As a side note, which really confuses the issue, is that there is a form of Taoism called Religious or Esoteric Taoism which is the

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

traditional Chinese folk religion. This is basically a form of animism but adding many other elements as well. Philosophical Taoism is based on the I Ching minus the religion but Religious Taoism adds back in a religious element.

It pays to really understand your subject and I do not recommend every Christian read about Asian philosophy and religion as there are other forms of animism that are mixed into the practices. The vast majority of traditional Chinese philosophy and literature deal almost solely with Philosophical Taoism.

Religious Taoism is a much later development in Chinese history in about the European Dark Ages. Most of the texts are still only in Chinese and I have not read any of them or any other form of animism. Philosophical Taoism started as we now know it at the time of Aristotle and when Buddhism started in India.

Examples of Cultural Confusion

One of the things that limited the Gospel in China was that the Catholic Pope said at the time of the Ming Dynasty that the Christians in China could not take part in Confucian rituals. Again, they assume the word ritual means religious when it has not been religious for thousands of years even at the time of the European Renaissance. Even at the time of Confucius the rituals mean the same in Europe as manners and had no religious meaning for at least hundreds of years prior. The emperor understood the difference between animism and humanism very well and could not accept that kind of ridiculous confusion of the pope between totally different things.

Recently the Eastern Orthodox Church banned Yoga because they mixed up the Yoga which is a path to Enlightenment with

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

western gymnastics and stretching exercises. Yet churches have no trouble having kids hunt for easter eggs or put up Christmas trees which were used solely for pagan rituals until much more recently.

Historical Church Synchronism

Early Christians in the Roman Empire synchronized Christianity with Greek Philosophy where we get doctrines like the confusing explanation of the trinity, scholasticism (where people understand the Bible through reason first and faith second), and the Protestant Reformation which led to a deterioration in the authority of the church and the Bible culminating in the Enlightenment and later Nationalism and Colonialism.

Whereas Taoism does not define who God is Plato argues for Gnosticism which is based on the idea that the devil created the world, Jesus being God but not Man, and that we are saved by secret knowledge. The Gnostic Scriptures are literally later additions to the Bible that contradict the Old and New Testament canons. Augustine was a Manichean which is a form of Gnosticism before he converted to Christianity.

What to Remember

It pays to really understand your subject and I do not recommend every Christian read about Asian philosophy and religion as there are other forms of animism that are mixed into the practices. Things are more complicated than you can explain in a soundbite. Most Christians soon realize Christianity is very complex, subtle, and vaste. Different people even Bible believing Christians have vastly different ideas about the Bible even in important doctrines.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

So the other major world religions do not need to be totally avoided or totally embraced but just like a medical doctor or a scientist is especially careful with certain things, so a theologian or philosopher needs to be as well. What you hear in the popular media and popular culture is at best poorly reasoned and ultra simplified. Most serious news outlets now cost more money than most people feel they are willing to pay. Professional writers and serious journalists need to eat too and most people cannot afford to do all that in their spare time.

The introduction of Eastern philosophy occurred mostly during and because of the major wars we fought there in World War 2 and the Cold War. Most Americans are only interested in other nations in as much as we fought them in a war. The media and Hollywood mixed things up considerably in their effort to mass market it and use it as a method of spreading their own ideology.

Bottom Line

Once someone comes up with an interesting cultural idea the first response of Hollywood and the media is to make money on it by making it mainstream. Look no further than the media's representation of the Church and Christians. Most Americans have traditionally had a very poor understanding or appreciation of anything outside business and now math and science.

Think of it this way. The marketer's questions are this: How can this belief system make money as it is or how do we need to change it to make money? Does Yoga as a path to enlightenment make us money or can exercise make us money by being themed as Hindu?

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Think of it another way. What is easier to do and more exciting - exercising or being a moral person? You also need to make things different enough but not too different to sell them. Exercise with a twist of Asia sound just similar enough and just different enough to market well amongst Americans.

The reason the media and Hollywood hate Christianity so much as it works against their business and ideological interests. The values of Christianity and the insistence on sticking to doctrine are very corrosive to the idea of getting people to buy things to make their lives easier. Christianity is not new and it is not easy. This is a marketing nightmare.

Inter-Faith Issues

Mixing Beliefs

I have been accused of one of the biggest fears of Christians today: synchronism. Basically a lot of the current Christian thinking is a response to certain perceived problems of the recent past. There are certain things in church leaders' and scholars' experiences that stay with them and give them a cause for concern. That is all fine and good.

The problem is this is backward leaning and so it doesn't prepare young people well, for future challenges to their faith. It is partially a failure of imagination. There are few new ideas, in the academic Christian world today and little changes over decades. There are so many people problems in churches and so little time to devote to research.

One of the big scares today comes from Progressive Christianity and Christian Nationalism, both of which could at least be understood better if Christians were not so paranoid about studying philosophy, specifically existentialism.

Just like any other subject, the general knowledge level is not very useful or technically accurate. If you want to have your own ideas or make a meaningful contribution to ideas in the humanities, philosophy would be a good place to start. The best self help books are generally based on philosophy, for example.

Philosophy has a long history of being studied within the Church, across the major churches, denominations, and worldwide until the Enlightenment and the rise of modern atheism. It is only recently that it has been treated with suspicion. This is equally influenced by an American objection to education in general.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Later, the Church had some very painful splits in the major denominations in America, over whether the Bible is objectively true. They also had a great fear of what was then called the New Age movement, which for some reason thought it came from Eastern Philosophy. Ironically, the most popular elements of Neo-Paganism as well as progressive politics come from Christianity directly.

So there is this concern that if you study too much in certain areas, in certain colleges, that you might lose your faith, or give up on it's fundamentals. I think this whole approach is a losing way of engaging the cultural wars (which I often think the Church should be on the other side of). I think when people lose their faith, it comes from not having a deep enough faith, because they have not encountered and overcome obstacles before. The other major factor is they get involved in a lifestyle or habit of sin or addiction.

I think many young people raised in the Church hang onto their parents faith and need the support of their church too much. I think the Church needs to strengthen young adults faith by bringing challenges to their faith while they are still in their church. Part of this could be done by the study of philosophy. Don't actually try this, as it will backfire and people will think you are trying to destroy their church.

So following a philosophy is about admitting that you have a limited point of view as a human being and you are being up and front about it. I believe the Bible and God are objective truth, but we, as humans, can never be completely objective. To think so is to place yourself into the place of God in your life.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

It is important to understand scripture, to understand its context, but one context often omitted is our point of view. We have to be honest that we are seeing a imperfect view of scripture, by simply being human and fallen.

Existentialism is a field of study in philosophy, that is about what is unique about human existence or free will. Many of the Apostle Paul's writings sound very much like Existentialism. The wisdom books of the Bible are philosophy.

Philosophy is not as much about answers, as it is about questions. The definition of what philosophy means is, in itself, a philosophical question and branch of philosophy. If you don't study philosophy today, you will follow society's views, not your own or God's. A good way to question the ubiquity and penetration of Science, into all facets of life, is through Existentialism.

So rather than take you away from your faith, philosophy and, in particular, Existentialism, will enable you to resist compromise of your faith, as you change and society changes, over the course of your remaining decades in your life.

Questioning things is good and Godly. It just depends on who you are questioning and Who you are accepting answers from. Just as rebellion against God is bad, but rebellion against injustice is good. Anger against other people is bad, but anger at sin is good.

Christianity, Paganism, and History

Atheism and modern paganism have similar ideals
These are beauty and strength
Just like Nietzsche
Which is similar to the pagan philosophers before Socrates

Even though I do not agree
With the pagan aspects of Nietzsche
He had the opposite ideas of Hitler

The problem was that he died long before his sister
And one of his books was not finished before he died
(Yes it was Nietzsche that died not God)
His sister being ideologically in the camp of the NAZIs
Rewrote this book to support NAZI ideas

Ironically Nietzsche had the
Polar opposite values that Hitler did
Nietzsche did not think highly of Christianity
But He loved Judaism

His North Men he admired were the Eskimos, not the Germans
He considered himself a European not a German
And spent much of his life in Switzerland

He supported free thinking and loved learning and books
He actually wrote some poetry too

The reason why he didn't like Christianity
Was because he saw it as a slave religion
He saw Christianity used to support cruel dictators

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

And people who tried to deceive the population to support wars

You can't make this stuff up
It just shows how you can
Take some ideas from another thinker
And end up with an entirely different view of the world

Berkeley was a devout Christian
But Hume took his ideas to promote atheism

Kierkegaard inspired Sartre
Even though they had opposite ideas on religion

People got entirely opposite ideas from Hegel
And they got mostly anti-Christian ideas
Even though Hegel was a devout Christian

So ancient Greek culture admired strength and beauty
They created the first Olympics and competed naked
Their great hero is Alexander the Great
Who was famous for taking over the Persian Empire by war
And he was tutored by Aristotle

People think of the the best known Greek philosophers as atheists
But neither Plato nor Aristotle challenged paganism
Plato believed in a variant of Gnosticism
Who believed the world was created by an evil power

But Nietzsche's philosophy is based on those
Writing philosophy in Greece before Socrates
And we only have fragments left
These earlier philosophers have little in common
With the most famous ones we usually talk about

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

When we refer to Greek Philosophy

So before the classical Greek era
There was a previous golden age in Greece
This I think is referred to as Archaic Greece
Which was the same time as the Iliad and the Odyssey

This was the time that they fought a great war against Troy
That we have the mythical Helen
Whose face launched a thousand ships
And Achilles who died from bleeding from his heel

There was the Trojan Horse that
Got the Greek soldiers into Troy by tricking them
Then Odysseus gets shipwrecked

And has to find his way home
And reclaim his throne
In a tiny island off the coast of Greece

There is a huge amount of Greek mythology involved in both
these events / plots
So this culture of the ancient Greeks
And their interest in the beauty and strength of people
Is in direct contrast with the Biblical view of people

People are considered loved by God
Because of God's sacrifice and humility
We are then to take on the role of Christ
And might suffer the same fate as Him

So people without God from a Biblical view
Are considered to be in darkness

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

And are basically the living dead
Spiritual death is the same as
Separation from God in Christianity

In fact, the gods and goddesses of
The Greeks and every other culture
Are considered to be evil spirits
According to the Bible

It is interesting to note
Philosophically paganism is actually
Less spiritual than Christianity

This is because a lot of the pagan values
Revolve around sex, power, and money
Some of this is true for Christians as well

But this is contrary to what the Bible teaches
Christianity is a religion of devotion to one God
And also encouraged moderation in place of excesses

God is the focus of Christianity instead of people
We have special powers in a sense as well
We can raise the dead and send away these gods

But we do so by Christ's power not our own
We are not to get involved in anything remotely like
Those supernatural practices

Christians have parties in as sense
Like the feasts of the Orthodox Church
But we are not to get out of control
Or do things that Christ would not do

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Like being gluttons or doing drugs

People say this idea of gods is all past us
But today we worship ourselves as gods

As well as politicians, sports figures, Hollywood stars, social media influencers, singers, and even popular icons like other famous people

Many people today do not accept that there is a spiritual world
But this is a very important aspect of the Christian faith

This is the reason why we study the Bible, pray, and go to church
As well as tithe, do the Lord's supper, and send missionaries to spread the Gospel
These are all religious rituals we do to worship God

All religions (as opposed to philosophies)
Worship a deity by doing religious ritual

People whom follow
Purely philosophical systems
Like Confucianism and Buddhism
Do not worship any gods

The power behind modern atheism and paganism
Has the same source
Ultimately Christians see the world as a battle
Between those who follow the Christian God
And those that reject Him

The role of other religions I hypothesize
Is that people tried to worship God

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

To the best of their knowledge

When Christianity is brought into a culture
That has never been exposed to it before
The people who adopt Christianity in that culture
Then need to decide what parts of their culture
Are contrary to Scripture and then reject those elements

In the past many white Christian missionaries
From Europe and the United States
Before the cultural revolutions of the Vietnam War era
Often mixed up what was Christian
And what was part of the missionaries' home culture

People around the world are asked
To worship God in certain ways
But most things in the Bible are either
Not very clear or allow a great deal of freedom
As to what is permitted for worship or lifestyles

One of the things that I very different
About the African independent churches
Is that they do not condemn polygamy
Or have such a limited interaction with the supernatural
Like we do in America

This difference is purely cultural
And these churches are as much
Following the Bible faithfully as we are
It is interesting that the Evangelical churches
Are not very powerful overseas
But the Gospel seems to be doing fine anyway

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Even though some people
Still associate Christianity with America
There is really little to connect the two
And there has been a huge amount of effort placed on
Synchronizing these two unrelated systems

You have to ask yourself
Where does Jesus or His followers ever
Talk about making Rome great again
Or them saying they love the Roman Empire
Or that the Roman Empire was based on Christian ideas

And our emphasis on the Roman Empire and then Europe
Is very ethnocentric and not historically accurate
The Gospel went in three directions

The earliest Church was the Coptic Church
And Ethiopians adopted Judaism
Long before they adopted Christianity

And the Persian Empire
At the time of the Roman Empire of the time of the Gospels
Had more people and more wealth than the Roman Empire

Iraq was the center of the Church (basically up the river a few
miles from Babylon) up until the year 1000
Islam for context did not arise and
Take the rest of the Middle East until about 650 years later
And they only did so with the help of local Christians

Unfortunately the Eastern Orthodox Church as we now call it
Had a theological fight over how to explain the trinity
Which although not stated exactly that way in the Bible

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

Was something important to state like that because of heresies
In the Church both in Europe and in the Middle East

Anyway the other Christians were treated so bad that
They actually were treated better under Islam
For the first few hundred years
(until it was acceptable for non-Arabs to convert to Islam)

America Never was Christian

The world in the 21st century is not giving up on religion. In fact, the world is more obsessed with religion than ever before. Europe and America combined are a small percentage of the entire world population.

The constitution is not based on Christian principles and most founders were not theologically similar to Evangelicals at all. Many of the ideas Evangelicals today in America have are from England of the 1700s and 1800s.

The way our country sees ethics and morality is vastly different than what the Bible teaches. These ideas come from the Enlightenment, not the Bible. Modern atheism and New Age religion come from this period.

Fundamentally, the Bible teaches that God sees freedom and rights fundamentally different. Anyone teaching differently is basing it on erroneous information either maliciously or out of being taught things that are not factual.

In the Bible, we are either slaves to sin or slaves to God. This is a purely spiritual distinction. The terms used are intended to impress on us the fact that we need to take seriously our spiritual situation.

God chose to save us at the greatest cost to Himself, as we chose to not follow certain basic rules. We have value, because God chose that. He has the power and authority to say so just as He had the power and authority to create reality with His voice.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

The only similar concepts between Christianity and American government pertain to the Bill of Rights. These are the legal equivalents of kindness and mercy. These character traits are ones Christians need to have, to prove they have saving faith.

We should limit the power of the military and law enforcement. In countries where no one gets away with crime, many people also are in prison because they were doing something Americans claim is their right. This includes the freedom to practice their religion.

Any country our size throughout history was referred to as an empire, regardless of how they described themselves. We also control most of what goes on in the world via our technological, economic, and military superiority. We actually created this world we blame others for, as we were the only world power for at least 30 years.

One of the ways we control the world is by getting the majority of the world's resources cheaply and easily. This is accomplished by putting in corrupt leaders. We then pay them off to keep their populations in continual poverty.

We have hundreds of small wars going on at all times, to enforce this. We also train people to commit crimes in foreign countries, to manipulate people into doing what our leaders want. This is how the Department of Defense works.

They do good things for bad reasons and bad things for good reasons. They also believe in sacrificing a few people and many animals to suffer greatly for a larger group of people. This is the way every powerful country operates and the difference is mostly geography and history.

World Religion and History by Ben Huot

At this point, the entire world economic, political, and social system is based on electronic surveillance and it's democratization. The technology spies from big nations had 20 years ago now is available inexpensively and designed for novices. There is now very little difference between police, organized crime, militaries, governments, and corporations.

Personal information is now worth more than oil. Mostly it is a bubble. It cannot be worth more knowing what you might buy, than you actually buying something. Governments though will always pay for it, as well as criminals.

This situation, the US deliberately set up for the world, is much like the books 1984 and Animal Farm by George Orwell. Democracy is the same as Imperialism. It looks different, if you live long in a 3rd world country, than it does within America. This is because we live in the homeland of the empire and we have American citizenship.

The reason why we have freedom of speech in America is because there are so many voices, that it all gets lost in the noise. There are also some very powerful people, who most people listen to and will believe anything they say. We are less knowledgeable about the rest of the world than most other countries and this is by design. Not only do we have a anti-supernatural bias but also an anti-intellectual bias in America.

Many people now think America is wealthy, because God has blessed us with this. If that is true, then why do most Christians in the world live in poverty that makes our country's homeless look rich? Why also are they persecuted in very painful ways, unlike anything we ever have or will have in America?