

Complete Psychological Topics 7 by Ben Huot

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by Ben Huot

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August 6, 2020

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First Things.....	5
For More Information.....	6
License	7
The Bible As It Is.....	9
Future of Church-Government Relations	16
Pseudo Fear	22
What I Learned from the Army.....	30
Life Lessons.....	30
Caveats.....	32
How the Army is Different	33
Army Philosophy	35
Training.....	36
Entering and Leaving the Army	38
Some More About Me.....	41
Musical Taste.....	41
Recreation.....	42

Complete Psychological Topics 7 by Ben Huot

Reading Preferences and History Ideas43

Personal Psychology45

Self Improvement.....46

My Philosophical Ideas47

Origins and Cross Pollination of World

Religions50

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First Things

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I even enjoy constructive criticism

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The Bible As It Is

The following poem is based on a composite of what I heard many times by some people in some churches over a long period of time.

Some of them have challenged the study of other religions as not being faithful to Christianity.

I disagree and state why I disagree.

This combination of views challenged is unlikely held by any one person in the church or outside.

This is not a challenge for all Christians to study major world religions.

This is my unique view and not the one of any denomination, theologian, or organization I have heard of.

This is not a critique of any theologian, denomination or organization related to the the church in particular.

Some people grow up

And can make their own decisions

Others rely on others to tell them what to do

Many people do not like the Bible

Because it forces you to think and feel

To live life with other people

And be exposed to the sin of the world

And yet decide that it is not worth it

And to take an active stance against it

Many people feel a need to shelter themselves from life

They refuse to engage the world on an intellectual level

This is why the church has continued to reject the academic world

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In the last few hundred years
Just like the church refused to get into the cities right away

They failed to distinguish between what they were taught and
what the Bible says

They can not separate what their political party says from what
God says

They tied together such an elaborate hedge around the Bible
Based on what their current cultural assumptions about life said

They loved their country and their era more than God
They chose to add to the Bible in the form of theology
Because they believed the average person incapable of
understanding the Bible for themselves

Is it really credible that people searching for God with all their
heart
And then end up serving the devil
Either they believe that God is not powerful enough, not bright
enough, or that He genuinely doesn't care

Our ideas are not Gods ideas
We do not know what is best
No matter how smart you are
No matter how much you research it
You will never be able to put God into a box

Why do you think people came up with philosophy and religion
in general
We who are the least devout of all the races
And who accepted the gospel last amongst those of this race

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Who are we to challenge the faith of others
Many would challenge our faith by our actions
You cannot choose as a person who is a Christian
Or who gets to use that term
You are not more right than other devout Christians

The point of philosophy is to ask questions
To lead people to God and moral living
If no one seeks for truth
How are they to find God
How can you say Christianity is the one true faith
Without studying other faiths

This witch hunting must end at some time
I hate to break it to you
Every human system or theology is full of holes
We do not serve doctrine

We serve a Who not a what
We serve a Living God
God has a personality
He has the ability to reason, feel, and choose
Just as we do
The difference is He is perfect morally, merciful, and not limited
by anything

There are many mysteries in the Bible
But what He asks us to do is not a mystery
He asks us to follow Him
We believe as an act of obedience

We make that choice because of many reasons

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A big enough one is just that He created the world
There is also His death and resurrection
There is also His preparing paradise for us
There is also that He started the Church for us
And gave us His Holy Spirit

King David was a man after God's own heart
What did David constantly do in the Psalms
He was perfectly honest with God
He questioned God constantly
Job constantly questioned God
And God rewarded him with not only answers
But brought back His family, fortune, and health

We need less thinking and more choosing
We need to feel less and believe more
We need to trust God's judgment
Not our own wisdom

We need to do less research
And more listening
We need not be correct technically
But we do need to believe and obey God

For a church so focused on a personal relationship with God
And putting away all distractions
We have an awful lot of theology and doctrines
We have a huge number of books
With many different opinions on everything

When they stop writing I will to
When they find a way to get no information in their heads from

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any source

By living alone in space for many years

I will consider not reading any more of the greatest thinkers of all time

To be taken seriously today

We can no longer scare people into faith

We can no longer use the same techniques

As those used to sell cars

Advertising is the same as propaganda

Evangelism is not about selling God

It is about inspiring a seeker

To find God for themselves

Because when people come into belief easy

They never develop a solid foundation in their faith

So when doubt comes

They give up and follow the next person

Selling the next human belief system

Have we not learned yet

The solution is not capitalism

The solution is not democracy

The solution is not socialism or communism

Neither is a police state

The solution is God's will done on earth

To acknowledge truth in other traditions

Is a sign of maturity and humility

It is a kindness and an act of good faith

If you think merely reading something

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Written about something you have no direct knowledge of
Will destroy your faith
Then I do question your faith

And if you are to compare major world religions
To serving the devil
Not only do you know nothing of what you speak
This is both very insulting and counterproductive to the spread of
the Gospel

But is based on a basic fear of the unknown
There are many unknowns in the Bible as well

Just because people in our country practice things without
reading about them from original sources
Does not mean that you can't read from original sources without
practicing things

If you want to live without distractions
Go be an astronaut
I hear we are going to Mars soon
Maybe you can educate the scientists on how to get there

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Future of Church- Government Relations

Some people see the Church as a moral force in the world
Others see it as degenerated into a fallen state
Much as happened with the ancient Kingdom of Israel
The Church acknowledges this to an extent
As there were centuries of attempts at church reform
Both before and after the Protestant and Catholic Reformations
Some people think that is all over today

The Church now sees reverse racism and feminism as bigger threats
Existentially the Church needs to rethink
How it interacts with the government and responds in ideology
The Church has historically consistently supported the government to such an extent
That it really believes in government ideology
What happens when the government goes so far on one direction
That the Church cannot in good conscience obey some laws

Many Christians see any kind of rebellion as a moral deficit
And even go so far as to say it is not Christian
We are to submit to the will of God in our hearts, minds, and souls
The difference is that yes we are to follow laws
But a rebellious attitude is appropriate Biblically
When a Christian refuses to believe in the human solutions like

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government

Many people stand out from the crowd merely to express themselves

It would be better if this was with moral purpose

Regardless when something a society is doing is wrong

Calling them out on it in many different ways

Is the most moral and Christ like thing to do

Christ was obedient to His Father in heaven

Christ even asked us to pay our taxes

Christ even socialized with corrupt officials to better spread the Gospel

But He challenged the religious establishment

When He saw corruption in temple sacrifices

There is an entirely different model of ethics and worldview

Stretching even to its conception of history

This is now in the process of being full embraced by mainstream America

I can admire aspects of this new ideology

I have little concern for whether it is practical or not

And it is largely out of anyone person's control even for powerful people

The country has opened the door for populism

Amongst the poor on both sides of the political spectrum

This issue hits the Christian world in a subtle way

Many may not ever make these connections

There are some things in Christianity

That are not negotiable or up to interpretation

As they are very clear in scripture

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Some those things in limbo are concerning sexual ethics and the status of the male in society

Some may think that sexual ethics are a personal thing

And that feminism poses no threat men's ability to coexist in peace

The problem is that things keep being pushed so far so fast

The idea of slippery slope in social and legal settings

Has been used to justify bad things like racism and slavery

And yes I fully agree my country has and continues to do

Very bad things in our names

I would go so far as to accept a fundamental change

In how we allow law enforcement to operate

I believe the government has gone way too far in its bid for power

All the government has to do is scare us

And people give it more power

This is not the first time even in my adult lifetime

Even though the Church was often used as a pawn unknowingly

In order to advance totalitarianism

This situation where male coexistence and a certain kind of sexual ethics

Make it impossible for any men especially white ones

Which a number of us in this part of the world still are

To accept this ideology

There are plenty of things as men in general that we do wrong

But the way God created us is not one of them

Furthermore, to hate myself for being a white male

Makes it almost impossible for me to love others as myself

As far as sexual ethics again many of us have been compromised

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But regardless we cannot tell God we no longer
Will hold ourselves to moral standards that are clear in the Bible
Different things throughout history have been important
To different groups of people and many laws differ accordingly
Whether our culture likes it or not
There are some things about sex and men and women
That are currently in vogue
That we cannot just accept as legitimate

I have always put animal life as more important than human life
As God not only has a covenant with animals as well as making
them
They have never sinned and are one of God's greatest work
People on the other hand are a dangerous force
For all other life forms especially animals
But that does not mean it is ok to treat people of any kind in mean
ways
Whether it is legal or not
I may have to choose in voting to support one cause or the other
But I cannot say that other issues are unimportant
Or accept their legality as legitimate

I will not agree that it is ok to be unkind
To anyone or anything as that is something
We all should understand and accept
Kindness is one of the most basic things
That all of us learn as young children even in secular schools

So on the surface certainly I believe that many reforms
Are necessary for our government to make
Including many more apologies, possibly restitution
And modifications to the way we understand history in schools

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But I cannot accept a worldview
That criticizes God and makes it impossible for me to have self
esteem
And the idea of changing what God has commanded is not up for
discussion

Depending on how far society wants to go with this
Christians may be forced into peaceful civil disobedience
As much as I am committed to staying out of politics
I will not give up on my religion
If we cannot practice our religion
This puts all Christians into a very awkward situation
Where they are at odds with the law
We must then as Christians choose God over the government
If forced into a corner

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Pseudo Fear

I know much about fear personally
As this is my major diagnosis
As I am certified mentally ill
I have been afraid since I joined the military
And now continue to be so many years after

Twice in my adult lifetime
The leaders got the people
To all fall in line
Behind the latest fad fear
First it was against a type of combat
And now it is against a flu

This all happens while real issues
That will really destroy the economy
Like the coming apocalypse
(Although God likely won't be coming soon)
Also known as climate change
Will bring us to our knees literally and figuratively

90% plus of voting America
About half of the population
Accepts the same major worldview
They are motivated by fear primarily
To do anything someone tells them they must do
Giving up their rights is considered appropriate
That our country was founded on

How can a person call themselves patriotic

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If they don't share the same ideas
Their country was founded on
Who they claim to admire
And who so many suffered for

Those who bear the brunt of the suffering
Necessary for our way of life
And the crazy political decisions we make
Are actually US citizens in the Army

I know that many in the military
Serve for their own reasons
Many people are in situation in America today
Where serving in the military
Actually improves their situation

But for many they are basically tricked
And try to get out as soon as possible
There are also fewer and fewer American citizens
Willing to join under any conditions

The conditions are not understandable
That we live under while serving in the military
From the average US citizen's point of view
The military is run as a dictatorship
Like a corporation but they expect much more
And you are never really off duty
And you cannot leave without a US Senator intervening
(Except in my unusual case)

It is not just that you are under
Almost impossible rules

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And unbelievable penalties
For the smallest infractions

You quickly realize your only option
Is to do whatever your superiors dream up
That combined with the disasters of combat is terrifying
Even when I was in
It was also common to be exposed to toxic chemicals
No matter where or what you did

Another aspect is that the pay is ridiculously low
And you do not get most of the
Advertised advantages for various reasons
I was unimaginably lucky that my superiors
Realized that I was mentally ill
And let me go or I would likely have been
Sent back for another enlistment

The churches have an interesting relationship
With the military on base
And I have mixed feelings
About those experiences I had in church
While serving in the military
This probably impacted my present understanding of the Church
And its relationship to the government and society
From these experiences

But the churches were very active on base
And this gave me hope
But they always seemed to support the military
When they counseled you
Many people do not know this

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But there are many different churches
On military bases of any size

The military as a whole
Did not particularly believe in God
When I was in there
But religion was used to motivate us

Our head drill sergeant prayed for us
Before we went to qualify at the rifle range
And we were given the choice of
Doing chores or going to church
On Sundays during Basic Training

I never felt safe while in the military
And I quickly realized there was more to it
Than was advertised by my recruiter sergeant
I thought I was going to work in an office environment

And I had asked directly about chemical weapons
And was told no one uses them any more
And the gas chamber is not that bad an experience

Later I found out through my training
Basically the entire Army works on the front lines together
And you are all infantry
Non Infantry just get to carry more gear

But the constant fear was a source of energy for me
I never trusted anyone as I knew
They could do anything they wanted with me
I thought a lot of those who were my direct superiors

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As they have the hardest job of all

Most the people at my level of rank
Were amazing people to work with
But I never trusted anyone farther up
Or what my immediate superior
Might be made responsible for making sure I did

So I am still afraid of many things today
But for people to fear death more than they do pain
Is hard to understand
Death does take us all and relatively quickly
In the grand scheme of things

If you are not at peace with death
I would recommend you deal with that as soon as possible
Instead of encouraging the government
To remove all civil liberties

Just like the war on terrorism
The flu will never leave us
And the legislation will last forever
Not only does our legal system look out past decisions
As the guide for future decisions
These computer systems will then remain in use
For whoever want to use them in the future

Privacy is not a cop out to get away with crime
Anymore than putting a lock on your door does
Privacy is another word for encryption and anonymity
Which are the basis for economic stability
In the modern world economy

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Just like in 2008 no one understood how big a risk
People were taking with our future
Because much like the environmental crisis
No one understands the math
Or has the ability to access every piece information

Just as Jesus said in the Gospels
That this is a wicked and rebellious generation
And no sign will be given but the death and resurrection of Christ
If they didn't believe the prophets or in what Moses said
They will not believe me no matter what

People today only believe in what they see
We really should not engage
In advancing our technology
To the point where things happen
That we don't understand
Are unwilling or unable to learn
And we do not trust those who do understand
Of course that might require
Some self control or government regulations

So this next few centuries
Will be much wilder a ride
Than the last 20 years
And this will be a major die off
For all the life forms
That we are emotionally fond of
Don't worry the creepy insects will do fine
And grow in numbers and range

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When in the Age of Revolutions
We gave up religion
In order to usher in the modern age
As a society we lost our morality
That is the basis for our problems today

We are no better than our ancestor were
We just have more power
Without the wisdom or moderation of a belief system
And have completely rejected the Christian God
And in so doing do not have the outside help
To overcome our problems

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What I Learned from the Army

Life Lessons

Pain can be limitless
In duration and intensity
God will not always save you from it
You cannot trust that your experts
Will actually succeed in lowering your pain
Even if they do understand your condition
Relaxing always helps when in pain
It is almost impossible for me to relax
I do poorly even under moderate pressure
If my life depending on me doing something I would die

Nothing is foolproof
Things can always get worse
Sometimes you can be forced
To do what you find scary
You will fail yourself sometimes
And others will fail you at the worst time

You only have a short time
With those who are important to you
You may never see them again
And never even hear when they leave

The church can and often will give faulty advice

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Or steer you in the wrong direction
If you need psychological help
And you are unique or intellectual
You will need to study philosophy
And write your own self help book

You are often your own worst enemy
And you can get yourself into more trouble
Than those plotting against you

Some things are funny and some are not
If you cannot distinguish easily between the two
Never try to be funny in any situation

Do not be too important or essential
Boring is ok and often preferred

Time can go very fast or very slow
Short periods of time appear very long when you are in pain

When the stress gets too great
Everyone screws things up

It is very easy to control another person
And there are endless ways to cause pain

Sometimes you cannot escape fate
Sometimes life makes little sense

Caveats

Everything I write about the army only applies to enlisted soldiers

Officers have an entirely different world they operate in

And it is truly a night and day difference

Many things I talk about the military philosophy sometimes precede the birth of the US and are common in other militaries of the world both historically and internationally

I was in the military in the mid 1990s so things have changed a lot since then

Although much has likely not changed

The Army is the main focus although I know to an extent about the other services as well

How the Army is Different

You hear about the Marines all the time

Because they are sent in first before a war is declared except for the Army and other special forces because of legal reasons

And because it is often more convenient for the US to launch amphibious attacks because of logistical and geographic reasons

The Army is basically the common man service and there is no glory in serving in it

The Army does the really hard work of holding land and routing out terrorists as well as spearheading invasions

The Army special forces have one of the hardest and least advertised job in the military

They go in before any regular troops and find, train, and lead average people in allied groups in the area and make them into a real army

What the Army thinks of themselves as doing best is training

The Drill Sergeant is actually an important position in the Army and it is competitive and difficult to become one

Many of our Drill Sergeants were special forces trained

The Army is the one service that does not get an air force besides small drones and helicopters

Army equipment, even tanks and helicopters are much less expensive than Navy or Air Force equipment

The Navy even not including the Marines was probably bigger than the Army at the time I was in

The big task the US Navy does is patrol every ocean and sea in the entire world all the time

Many army bases allow anyone to come on base as they have nothing bigger than jeeps

And all the rifles and small artillery are locked down

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The army is basically all foot soldiers on the front line for any job

Army Philosophy

The Army does not want you to be smart, self-motivated, or even think at all and does not even promote heroism unless it is specifically necessary for the mission

Our and European countries have fought and won wars by installing a mental mindset called discipline

Discipline is partially about following orders and being a team player but it also extends to your emotional perspective

The Army has its own culture and the reason for that is because people come to the military from a wide variety of backgrounds So when you got to an unfamiliar, hostile, and frightening location far from home you can depend on the military doing things the same way

If you never adjust to this culture emotionally even if you follow orders and work very hard you will have internal emotional struggles your entire time in the service

That is essentially what happened to me and the stress triggered a genetic predisposition I had to Schizophrenia

Most of your time in the Army you are either at the rifle range, cleaning something, or moving something

Training

The military waves a certain percent of their members on any particular qualification needed to do anything in the military
If you cannot hit a target if your life depended on it or even under no stress

This does not disqualify you from the military

You can't really fail out of most military (infantry type) trainings (except special forces)

You usually just repeat it over and over again

The military doesn't really go under the assumption that anybody actually want to be there as they have to work people who are drafted (historically)

The military still want enlisted soldier to get as much college credit as possible and that is key to advancing even for the enlisted, but it is very difficult to get the time to take the courses, especially in the Army

If you cannot intellectually understand combat training you are below middle school developmentally and academically

Military training is basically hard for one reason

You are under stress while doing it

The reason why they stress test you in training is because combat is hard because people are shooting back at you not that it is hard to blow things up

That is why terrorism is so cheap and easy

So every military training especially the infantry ones are mostly a stress test

One of the big problems the way our country does combat training is that we only allow them to do kind things in training

The only problem with that is that those who we fight wars with generally are not kind to us at least

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We often don't treat our enemies very well lately either
The military also doesn't believe in sleep or time off
In fact if you have a non combat role in the military you continue
to still train for combat basically after you finish your job your
entire enlistment

These are exactly the same things you learned first in basic
training

And all Army go to the gas chamber at least once a year

It is filled with tear gas but it is still very painful

That is why they don't want anyone with any breathing problems
enlisting

The reason the Army screws things up constantly is the mission is
often the lowest priority

As long as you give 150% and follow all orders you can screw up
almost anything in the military constantly and do well in any
military assignment

Entering and Leaving the Army

If you don't like the idea of skydiving into live machine gun fire into a desert or jungle in the middle of the night or you aren't blessed with mechanical abilities

The Army is the wrong place for you

Most people in the military want out as soon as possible as they find these things out no matter where they are stationed or what job they have

Even if you are mentally ill, you need a US member of congress to get you out

Everyone really signs up for a 8 year term and although the extra part is inactive service you can and likely will be called back in this time frame again due to another war

If you want to re-enlist for another tour you usually get a lot of money in cash and get to be a sergeant which is good on your resume

The downside is that you are now responsible for 4-8 new soldiers doing whatever they are told to do for the next 4 or more years and you get paid about the same as before

It takes weeks to get into the Army and months to get out If you are in for less than 6 months it is as if you were never in

There were about 4 plus types of discharges when I was in the military including, honorable, general, other than honorable, dishonorable and medical

But unless you get the honorable discharge you qualify for no veterans or former military government programs

To get most of the benefits and not have most of the downsides, join the Air Force instead

If you are going as enlisted

The only downside to the Air Force is that it is hard to get

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promoted as enlisted because people stay in so long

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Some More About Me

Musical Taste

I have always liked upbeat music better

I recently learned that I like Baroque era better than Romantic Era classical music

I have traditionally preferred a woman's voice for music

I usually listen to my music on low volume

Like to buy my music rather than stream or rent it

Recreation

I don't like wild parties or games that require thinking
I have not watched TV for over a year
Science fiction has become too violent for me
I enjoy what most would call working
I can't have pets because I cannot remember to feed them
I don't drive a car because my mind wanders too much
I know how but do not have the energy to meditate
I also have trouble relaxing
I am glad I live in the Pacific Northwest
I actually enjoy the rain and dark skies

Reading Preferences and History Ideas

I don't want to travel far

But I enjoy reading about other places and times

I still have hundreds of books on my reading list

Most of my text books are now digital

My favorite writers of all are all philosophers or mystics

I like to read history and religion concerning Asia, Europe, and Africa

The Americas never really interested me for in depth study

I find the 19th century depressing worldwide and over studied

So I try to find books written or written about times before the 19th century (during the premodern and early modern periods)

I have new respect and interest in Eastern Europe after reading about its Renaissance era history

I think more study of Central and Eastern Europe plus the empires of the Dutch and Portuguese would help people understand European history better

I am one fo the few intellectuals that still believes Africa is important

I believe it is central to the future of the church and Biblical prophecy

I believe that Ethiopia has been given the promises first made to Israel in the Old Testament

I have learned a number of years ago that the Christians had a similar kind of persecution in the Middle East, North Africa, Persia, and Southeastern Europe as Jewish people have in Europe for centuries

This persecution starting getting bad about the year 1000 AD and continued to get worse until many of the Middle Eastern Christians held out in the mountains between Iraq and Iran after

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the Mongol Invasions

For 30 years between the 2 World Wars 1/3 of the Armenian people were killed and 2/3 of the Assyrian people

I have recently lost respect for the State of Israel due to their behavior regarding assisting the US in running a world police corporation

And specifically for deliberately spreading malware that is hitting small communities in around the world and causing pain in rural America

Personal Psychology

I used to find sunsets depressing
I find I am happier mid-project
I look about 10 years younger than I am
I have grown a beard over the last few years as I have never been good at keeping my face clean shaven
I have also been said to have a pleasant laugh and nice smile
I have a very slap stick sense of humor
And I enjoy making people laugh
I had an outgoing friendly personality when I was a kid
Now I have a more emotional and artistic temperament
I think cows are cool
And I still try not to eat beef because of that
I have many bookcases full of stuffed toys
Most people describe me as a very religious person
I have been obsessed with humility since high school
The military then intensified this feeling
After serving in the military a short while I never wanted to become famous or be any kind of leader
After the military I also decided to take fewer risks in life Having Schizophrenia makes my life challenging because it is a very lonely disease and it makes you very tired (especially with the medicine)
I have always felt myself lucky that I was not injured worse in the military than I was
I have come to terms with the possibility that I will never find romantic love in my lifetime
I keep the light low in my house

Self Improvement

I just organized my house after living in it for several years
I still don't put any of my pictures on the wall
I have just started walking long distances again
I pull my back muscles when I engage in an lifting
And I get very hot and sweaty when I clean my house
I love to color code things
I recently got bright colored cases for my electronics
There is enough battery power for a days worth of use
I have been closer to my family the last few years
My parents have also given me great feedback only writing,
graphics, and website over the years
I have also made a bigger effort to study the Bible and listen to
Christian music the last few years

My Philosophical Ideas

I was drawn into philosophy because I could not find any self help book that was really helpful

I have been calling my positions in politics apocalyptic as liberal does not provide an accurate and useful enough meaning for my views

I believe that our greatest problem worldwide is global warming
I found that I can embrace the world bad as it is and still find joy in life

I do this by shifting my focus on self improvement rather than worry about convincing others of things they are not willing to change

One of the books that helped steer me in the right direction was Eat, Pray, Love

I ended up combining 2 different schools of philosophy, Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism

I work hard to make sure everything I create that I put on my website makes sense within these philosophies

The summation of my website theme is making things clear and concise in all areas of my life including the website

I do not speak very clearly plus I speak very fast so I have a hard time communicating by voice

That may be why I write so much

I have some unusual view for being a Bible believing Christian in contemporary America

But my general areas of disagreement are cultural and political and I agree with their core theology

Many people fear death but I think it is like waking up from a dream

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Origins and Cross Pollination of World Religions

Although there have always been worshipers of the one all-powerful, all-good creator God who would later be named The Lord in the Old Testament and revealed His Son named Christ in the New Testament and sent out His Holy Spirit into the now called Christian Church

Most major world religions predate Christianity. Islam is the only major religion to have come after Christianity and still be a major force in the world today.

Christianity is built on and is a continuation of the same religion as Judaism (from a Christian point of view). Christianity (and Judaism) have introduced the world to the ethical concept of forgiveness of sins by God by faith in obedience to Him. Although you can become a Christian in maybe half an hour, you live your faith your entire lifetime.

Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism are all part of the same religious system as they have the same system of ethics.

One of the major unifying concepts is called karma, which is similar to the concept of sin, but it is dealt with by doing good deeds and developing discipline to continue to do so. You are

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then reincarnated by the force of your karma, over and over again after you die. The proof for this is that you are supposed to see karma happening in your own lifetime.

Hinduism is called a monotheistic polytheistic religion in that they worship ultimate reality in Hinduism - the true Self. But they worship this force indirectly through the various deities of the Hindu faith.

Hinduism has four major paths to enlightenment which correspond to the different major personality types of Jung. They also correspond to the major castes of the Hindu caste system.

By tradition, in India, you are born into Hinduism by being Indian ethnically. This is one of the major reasons why Hindus often don't accept people trying to convert people from Hinduism and why most branches of Hinduism do not evangelize those of other faiths.

In Buddhism, desire is what causes suffering by compelling you to not living ethically. In Buddhism, in your last lifetime before you ascend to a higher plain you want to accumulate no karma because this is the only way you can break the cycle of reincarnation.

There are few reliable records of the history of ancient India, before Buddhism, at least, but there exist a huge number of religious texts written at that time. Ancient India appears to have been much more interested in literature, philosophy, and religion and not so interested in history. They also did not write any of these things down for many centuries at least.

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China was cut off from the rest of the world geographically until the creation of the Silk Road connecting the Persian Empire to China, by connecting through the Himalayan mountain range, North of India. This explains why China developed so much differently and with little input from other cultures until much later in their history.

Chinese history goes back at least 5,000 years and Chinese civilization peaked by the end of the Dark Ages (the first half of the Middle Ages in Europe). Taoism precedes Confucianism at least by an entire imperial dynasty.

Confucianism was an idea developed by a new non-religious government in China called the Zhou dynasty and Confucius wanted to revive this idea at the end of the dynasty's life.

Taoism comes from the preceding Shang Dynasty or even earlier. Lao Tzu wanted to revive the philosophical components of what was compiled as the I-Ching in the Zhou dynasty. Lao Tzu lived at the same time as Confucius. Taoism took the philosophy of the I-Ching but rejected its religious elements.

In reality, by looking simply at how both the Tao Te Ching and Analects of Confucius are written, it is quite likely neither of these philosophies were developed or even written down by just one person.

Confucian philosophy was concerned with only the public sphere of politics and sought to promote civil service, imperial stability, and government reform. Taoism was defined as everything that Confucianism was not. Taoism was entirely non-political and personal. It was mystical, health concerned, and speculative.

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Philosophical Taoism was later added onto by numerous volumes of still untranslated texts that form a basically shamanistic or animistic religion in contradiction to the original purely Philosophical Taoism. This form of animism is called Esoteric or Religious Taoism. This religious form of Taoism was also associated with the folk traditions of China, not with the traditional literary works of the scholar-officials.

Later, Buddhism came to China and this is where Mahayana Buddhism took root first. This philosophical branch of Buddhism was later developed into what most Americans call Zen and Pure Land Buddhism, which have historically been practiced in most of East Asia including China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Zen Buddhism takes many ideas from Taoism, much as Hinduism and Buddhism took many ideas from Jainism, and Sikhism has taken from Hinduism.

Early India and Early Iran were settled by same ethnic group and they continued to share similar ideas and evolve similarly many centuries later. Early Mazdaism was very similar to Vedic era Hinduism. This civilization called Aryan was based on a horse-riding, oral epic poetry tradition, and did Brahmanic rituals.

The Aryans in India settled in the same place already occupied by the Indus River Valley Civilization which practiced Jainism, which later inspired many later developments in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Jainism is likely where the Hindus got the idea of meditation and maybe even the idea of karma.

In Iran, they practiced Mazdaism for a very long time and later

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changed religion to Zoroastrianism and also some later adopted Manicheanism. Saint Augustine was a manichean before he converted to Christianity, and the development of the idea of the trinity was done so to counter unbiblical ideas coming from this religion and Arianism in Europe.

It is unclear when Zoroaster actually lived but at the time of the Prophet Esther in the Old Testament, both Jewish prophets and Magi were in close contact and likely crossed path in intellectual circles. It is likely some of the ideas that some people think originated with Zoroastrianism actually come from the book of Isaiah and other Old Testament books.

Zoroastrianism, like Hinduism was based on an oral epic poetry, focused on ethical conduct primarily, and likely was not averse to adding ideas from other religions. In Zoroastrianism, there is a one good creator God, a hell and heaven, evil spirits, free will, and a second coming of God.

All these systems deal with the concept of suffering and are not against combining elements of other religions. This is not true with Christianity and Islam.

Manicheanism was started in the Persian Empire in the century following the writing of the New Testament. It was a form of Gnosticism designed to make Christianity take on pagan ideas. Like other forms of Gnosticism, in this view of reality, Jesus is God but not man and there is no salvation by Jesus death and resurrection. Dualism is a major aspect of this religion where they believe that Jesus is good but not all powerful and the devil is evil but is all-powerful. They also believe evil spirits had kids which created people.

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This is about as pagan and contrary to the Bible as is possible with any religion I have heard of. Many of the scriptures or “gospels” of the Gnostic “Christians” were written a century or two after the entire New Testament was written. Some of these scriptures go so far as to detail unfounded speculation contrary to Scripture about Jesus activities as a child and young man as well as detailing some inappropriate sexual practices.

Islam took over the Middle East for three reasons: the Bible was not translated into Arabic in late antiquity, the churches kept arguing over semantics of how to explain the concept of the trinity and so lost non-scholarly interest, and the Byzantine Empire / Eastern Orthodox Church was so brutal to Christians in the Middle East that early Christians helped Muslims take over the Middle East either by surrendering voluntarily or by leading troops in combat.

The Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire also kept fighting each other and there were also internal conflicts within the Persian Empire. Both also were fighting a proxy war in Arabia between Jews and Ethiopians. One of the things that Islam provided the Arab people was uniting them even though they are tribe based like the Scots or the Afghans.

Islam has taken much from both Judaism and Gnostic writings. The Koran talks of the same patriarchs but they have different histories. The Koran though must be read in Arabic as it does not translate well.

In practice, the five pillars of Islam form the blueprint of how to live life as a devout Muslim.

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- The first thing you do is declare “There is no God but God and Muhammad is His prophet” three times.
- You then pray five times a day towards the east or towards Jerusalem just as the Christians in the Middle East have for five centuries before Islam existed.
- You are to give a small amount to charity.
- You fast one month every year.
- You go on a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia at least once in your lifetime. Before you go, you have to sell everything you have and prepare for your death before leaving.

Muslims also do not drink alcohol or eat pork.