

When Religion Becomes Evil 1 - Absolute Truth Claims

I. Introduction

- A. Is Religion the Problem?**
- B. New Atheists**
- C. Toxic Components of Religion**

II. Absolute Truth Claims

- A. Uniform Consent and “Doctrinalism”**
- B. Flexibility and Interpretation (Christian and Islamic Examples)**
- C. Deconstruction**
 - 1. Various Epistemological Sources**
 - 2. Language as Symbol**
 - a. What does “God” mean?**
 - b. Cultural and Historical Variations**
 - c. What does “Omnipotence” mean**

D. Dangers

- 1. Example 1 - 9/11 Aftermath**
- 2. Example 2 - “God does not hear the prayers of Jews”**
- 3. Example 3 - Texas Christian Life Commission**

III. Abuse of Sacred Scripture

- A. Positive Aspects of Sacred Scripture**
- B. Selective Reading and Interpretation**
- C. Turning Over Personal Power of Reflection**
- D. Literalism and Inconsistency**
- E. Issues of Translation**
- F. Non Christian examples**
 - 1. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida**
 - 2. Nichiren (Buddhism)**
 - 3. Nathuram Godse (Hinduism)**

IV. Concluding Remarks

- A. Faith and Absolute Truth Claims**
- B. Healthy Religion**