

Is Religion Passe?

Cheryl Roth
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Many people today say they are against organized religion, usually because they've had some kind of negative experience. Often young people view religion as being controlling, and once they've left the shelter of the home environment they flee the church as well. I recently watched a very insightful video on [100 Huntley Street](#) that sheds some light on this phenomena.

Whenever we face changes that we perceive as negative, it's important to ask ourselves (or God) the questions, "What's really going on here?" and "Can something good come from this?" By asking these and other questions with a prayerful heart we open a way for God to give us insight. In that spirit, this Sunday's message will be a shared experience as we dialog on the topic of the relevance of religious traditions in

today's world.

What is the Purpose of Religion?

"Why throughout history have people needed to improve themselves through morals, ethics, and religion? Why should we observe them? It is because we sense something is wrong with us, and we desire to return to our original standing before God."

God, the Parent of humankind, cannot remain aloof when He sees His sons and daughters in their fallen state. They are like broken radios, so God created repair shops to fix them. These repair shops are religions. Seeing the many traces of these repair shops down through history, we cannot deny the existence of God." - Sun Myung Moon

Whether we see the trail of religious history in a positive light or a negative light all depends on perspective. We can look at the bloodshed in the Old Testament, the Crusades, or even the current world situation with terrorism rooted in Islamic extremist factions, and tell ourselves that religion is a bad thing. Or we can look at the good influence that religion has had in shaping the world we live in.

I came across this video on [Business Insider](#) showing the development of the World's major religions. It tells us something about human nature:

People want to believe, to understand, to feel purpose and to strive toward something. Religion has played the role of a guiding light throughout history and if we look into the teachings of every major religion we see similarities in the way they satisfy the human longing for God and a life of goodness. But people also make mistakes and do stupid things – even religious people can misunderstand scripture and make a bad decisions.

Is your view of religion more positive or negative?

It's important to know where you stand and why. Do you look at religion and it's traditions with a jaded or cynical viewpoint because of the bad things people have done? Corruption exists in every culture, society, organization, business or religion because greed and ego exist in people. No government has ever been able to make laws that end corruption or crime. However, when people live up to the ideals of their religious faith goodness is able to flourish.

However hard the original mind may struggle to attain goodness, we can hardly find any examples of true goodness in this world under the sovereignty of evil. Human beings have thus been compelled to seek the source of goodness in the world transcendent of time and space. This necessity has given birth to religion.

Through religion, fallen people mired in ignorance have sought to meet God by ceaselessly striving toward the good. Even though the individuals, peoples and nations that championed a certain religion may have perished, religion itself survives. (Exposition of the Divine Principle, Eschatology 2.3)

We can take out the word "fallen" (which refers to the Judeo-Christian concept of the Fall of Man) and replace it with a word like "immature", or "selfish", "clueless", or even "lost". However, no one likes to think of themselves in this way. We all like to think we are good, but no one can deny that there exists contradiction and conflict within.

Can you create goodness alone?

Religion has served two purposes in human history. The first is to give us a path to grow closer to God through wise teachings, worship and traditions. The second is to provide community, a place where we can practice loving one another and receive support.

God created everything the universe in pairs for a reason, we need each other. Goodness comes about through give and take action. Even God needs to have give and take action. God made us in a way that we would strive to be like our creator so that He/She could have a relationship with us. And God created us to seek relationships with each other so that we could grow to our fullest potential. Love and goodness are the result of give and take action.

Is Going to Church Necessary?



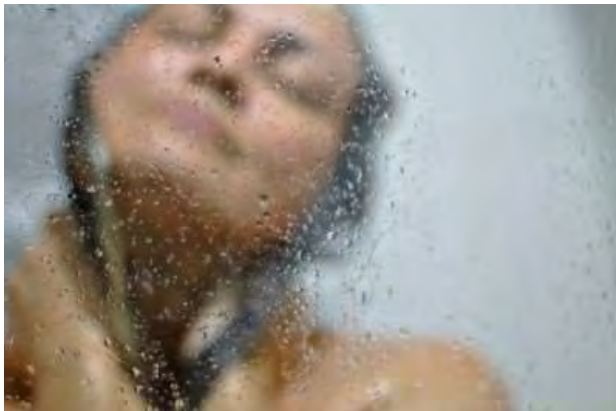
How does God feel about an empty church building? Probably similar to a parent with an empty nest. —Church isn't a building – it's a community of faith It's God's family creating community. —Attending church is simply a reminder, a way to strengthen our ability to put God, others & goodness first.

Perhaps the question should be, “Does everyone need a family?” or “Does everyone need a supportive community?”

What is family to you? What do parents do while their children are growing up? They remind us to be good, for your own sake as well as for others. Recently I met a lady who told her young son that no matter where he is she can see what he's doing because when he was born she put a camera in his stomach. I thought that was really cute. The development of a child's conscience comes from the awareness of their parent's approval or disapproval of their actions.

Maybe we can all be a little more compassionate and supportive in our relationships, but relationships are also meant to keep us accountable for our actions.

God is everywhere all the time



It's true that we can experience God anywhere at any time; at home, at the beach, even at the mall – so why come here on Sunday? We can read the Bible and other religious books at home or at the library daily, we can even watch church on TV or online. We can go to Meetups to practice meditation or listen to spiritual teachers, we can even go to Envy sports club on Wednesday or Friday nights to practice Holy Yoga with Grace. So why do we need church, it just seems passe.

Participating in a faith community by attending a worship service and fellowship once a week is like taking a bath. You may not remember every word of the sermon but the message and the love washes through you, helping you stay clear about your value and purpose. Imagine if you never took a bath – you would get pretty dirty and smelly after a while, maybe you would even become unrecognisable. Having a weekly faith practise that includes a relationship with God and others helps us stay spiritually clean.

How do I love thee?

We all have different love languages and different God languages. What causes you to feel close to God, or spiritually empowered to live a good life may be different from your neighbor. Spend a few minutes discussing with the person next to you these three questions:

- —What refreshes your spirit?
- —How do you feel empowered?
- —How do you feel God's love?

Even if you feel God's love mostly by being alone in the woods, we are enriched by sharing our hearts and time with each other. We gain a fuller understanding of the heart of God, a God who can love everyone – even the people who are so different from ourselves.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” [Hebrews 10:24-25](#) | [NIV](#)