

Conflict between Morals and Secular Society

Religion and National Identity

- Many traditional religious groups are closely linked to traditional ethnic groups, different ethnic groups in India worship slightly different forms of the major religions. Many traditional European ethnic groups in the past worshipped different forms of Christianity or paganism as well.
- Oftentimes, national/international borders are also linked to religious groups as well. To belong to a specific people meant sharing their beliefs, and living in the same geographical location.
- Some people argue that modern society doesn't fit this idea, as people have moved away from traditional geographical locations, such as Muslims in Europe and Christians in China.
- There are a few different types of religious states in the world, they are:
 - **Ethno-Religious State** – Somewhere like Israel where it is called a 'Jewish' state is used to refer to the ethnicity of the majority population rather than the religion.
 - **Theocracies** – A country ruled by religious leaders whom have been formally recognised by the majority of the population as a qualified leader. One example of a theocracy is Iran, which is largely Shia Islam, and whose 'supreme leader' is a Muslim cleric.
 - **Traditional** – A country that associates with religion out of tradition, even though they are technically a secular state. One such country could be the UK with Christianity, or other options could be Thailand with Buddhism, despite it not being a state religion.

Proselytisation

- Jesus's last words are commonly known as 'The Great Commission', they are as follows:
'Go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptise them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have told you to do.'
- This 'Great Commission' is called evangelism and many Christians take it as their duty to convert people to Christianity actively, and in pursuit of Godliness in the process. Evangelists seek to convert people out of love, they don't want them to go to Hell, inevitable without Jesus.
- Proselytisation is somewhat controversial because some people believe that it is somehow an 'invasion of their personal belief and privacy'. But in reality, most evangelists only seek to spread the gospel or good news out of duty to God. The person being evangelised may feel questioned.

- Some people feel that they have no duty to be involved in proselytisation, and many have looked for disciplinary measures for such people in similar circumstances:
 - A Christian nurse was disciplined for encouraging patients to pray to get better.
 - Another nurse who was disciplined for praying with a colleague, giving her a Christian book and inviting her to church events.
 - A nursery worker who was sacked because she told a co-worker, a lesbian, she was a sinner. However, she had added that all people were sinners and God forgave them.
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Agnostics and Atheists

- **Agnostics** – People who say that there is no way to prove that God exists, but they also say that there is no way to prove that God doesn't exist. Therefore, everyone is entitled to their own logical and worked out opinion. They would say that religious beliefs shouldn't affect others.
 - **Atheists** – People who do not believe in God, and say that there is no way to prove his existence. They say that religions shouldn't state there is a God without proof or evidence.
 - **Secularists** – People who are usually Agnostic or Atheist, but only oppose the restriction of freedom of belief and proselytisation, stating that it infringes on the right to believe of others.
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Morality

- Christians argue that God must exist or there would be no morality in the world. They state that people cannot be morally good by themselves, and that someone must have set a standard. This belief is centred around the idea that God set the standard by giving the Torah to the Jews.
- Christians also say that Jesus's teachings reflect God's positive values. However, Atheists argue that these values are not God's values, but are instead human values.
- **Compassion** – The Bible teaches that God's compassion is reflected by the fact he 'gave his only son' so that all would have 'eternal life'. Christians also say that should 'love your neighbour' and to 'love your enemies' equally. This teaches that everyone should be treated equally.
- **Social Justice** – The Bible teaches that Christians have a religious, moral and societal duty to help the poor, sick and needy. The parable of the sheep and goats teaches this. Jesus separates those who are good and bad to the poor, who will sit at his right hand side and who will not.
- **Peace** – The Old Testament, specifically the book of Isaiah states the desirability of peace and development. It says 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore'. Jesus also says 'Blessed are the Peacemakers' in the Beatitudes.
- **Environment** – Christians believe that the environment is the creation of God and therefore human beings are 'stewards' tasked with looking after the whole world. 'The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, and all who live in it' states that God is the owner of it.

Secular Disagreements about Religious Values

- Many Christians are concerned that Christian values are no longer valued in modern society and that sexual liberation and other issues are becoming major problems for religion to address.
- **Impermanence of Marriage** – Christianity teaches that marriage is lifelong, ‘what God has joined together, man must never separate’, some believe it is too easy for married couples to separate. But many divorced Christians will not remarry, out of commitment to their previous partner.
- **Sex before Marriage** – While now socially accepted, many Christians question this act as an issue which must only occur within marriage. It is an act of love and procreation, which must not happen outside of such a binding for fear of breakage or lack of commitment.
- **Cohabitation** – Living together before marriage is now largely accepted and seen as a step towards marriage, some Christians disapprove as it supports a sexual relationship, but many people see it as a potential stepping stone towards the Christian ideal.
- **Parenting outside Marriage** – Some Christians say that it is impossible to raise good children outside marriage. Others suggest it is difficult but not impossible. Other Christians are actively parents out of wedlock, especially in modern evangelical churches.
- **Single Parenthood** – Some Christians see single parenthood as a serious issue. But many actually regard it as an alternative pathway which inevitably leads people to God through brokenness.