

# **How Would Religion Evolve in the Near Future?**

## **5 Big Questions to Stimulate Your Thinking**

**Center for the Study of World Peace and Religions**  
**WorldPeaceHow.com**

We are presenting these 5 questions here for your consideration:

1. What is the purpose of life?
2. Does religion contribute positively or negatively to mankind? Could you give any examples in support?
3. What is a religion? Is there a clear definition for the term?
4. Does “god” exist?
5. Is there anything we can do to enhance the contribution of religion to mankind?

**The answers to these 5 questions follow:**

**1. What is the purpose of life?**

Simply put, it is almsgiving. Understand what almsgiving is, and appreciate the distinction between the giving of wealth, and the giving of teaching. The significance of giving of teaching may be huge and should not be overlooked. Spreading positive messages via the internet may perhaps be a form of almsgiving.

**2. Does religion contribute positively or negatively to mankind? Could you give any examples in support?**

The contribution of religion to the welfare of mankind lies in the fact that every religion teaches kindness. Although their specific teaching may differ among

each other, religions allow people to learn the ways to behave among others in this world.

In the attempt to use Catholicism as an example, its “Ten Commandments” state that:

1) I am the LORD thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me; 2) You shall not take the name of God in vain; 3) Remember to keep holy the Sabbath; 4) Honor your father and mother; 5) Thou shalt not kill; 6) You shall not commit adultery; 7) Thou shalt not steal; 8) Do not bear false witness; 9) You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; 10) You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Using Buddhism as an example, it has the Three Kinds of Meritorious Behaviour, the first of which, called the Blessing of Heaven and Man, teaches people:

We must support and take care of our parents. 2) We must pay attention to our teachers. 3) We must remain compassionate and refrain from killing any humans or animals. 4) We must cultivate the ten kinds of benevolent behaviours: (a) not killing; (b) not stealing; (c) not committing adultery; (d) not being greedy; (e) not being angry; (f) not having wrong views; (g) not lying; (h) not speaking harshly; (i) not speaking divisively; (j) not speaking idly.

It follows that generally, the teachings of religions provide guidance towards benevolent behavior, in order to elevate an individual's moral standards to the highest level.

The above benevolence guiding characteristics of religion is a positive influence. As to its negative side, it is crucial to note that believing as the absolute truth in things which have not been verified could render a person into the realm of superstition; a search for the truth could only be fruitful with utter sincere honesty.

### **3. What is a religion? Is there a clear definition?**

It is suggested that "religion" should to be clearly defined. But until now, an appropriate definition for "religion" is still lacking.

A new definition for the term "religion" is proposed here:

"Religion is a philosophy or teaching developed from the belief that the spiritual nature of a person continues to exist after the death of the body and a reward or a punishment is accorded depending on his or her behavior; and through which philosophy or teaching, there are certain guidelines devised for people to follow. "

Many religious followers believe that through their religion, they could receive the best outcome in life. As religions could exert powerful influence, there is an

urgent need to have a clear definition for the term religion. Only when it could be defined, people can begin to understand what is the core value of religion. This is important.

#### **4. Does “god” exist?**

An answer, believed to be a rational one, is supplied here, and humbly begs to be corrected.

It is believed that myriad sorts of things can be classified into two categories.

The first is addressed as aspects involving eternity.

The second is called aspects with a beginning and an end, which can also be addressed as the transient aspects of matters.

It is believed that humans have sufficient intelligence to gradually achieve full analysis concerning all of those things which have a beginning and an end.

On the other hand, it is believed that humans have no knowledge on anything from the aspects involving eternity. It has been the same in the past, and continues to be so today.

When we conduct research on the issue of whether god exists, we could consider it in two separate stages.

First, from within the transient aspects of matters, we know god does not exist. In this realm, where anything could be verifiable with scientific proof, the existence of god has never been verified.

On the other hand, as to all matters relating to the realm of eternity, people existing within the transient aspects of matters do not possess a level of wisdom sufficient for understanding the realm of eternity. Therefore, to answer this question, man could not confirm if god exists or not.

In discussing the most fundamental question in religion, one should be sincere and pragmatic. When discussing beliefs that have not been confirmed, this aspect should be made clear.

The discussion surrounding this issue whether god exists or not have been broadly categorized as “theism” and “atheism”. Both are theories that could not be proved in the aspects of eternity. So, in reality, one could only say nobody knows for sure.

## **5. Is there anything we can do to enhance the contribution of religion to mankind?**

We are of the view that a solution exists; there are two points.

First, when handling religious related matters, everyone handling religious matters must maintain a

sincere and honest attitude, and shall not hold as the absolute truth anything that has not been verified. This may give religion more confidence in the hearts of the people.

Second, there is a need for defining what religion really is. When one attributes a definition to religion, one will know the core value and significance of religion, and from there, one would realize the distinction that there are matters that fall within the scope of religion, and matters that fall outside.

In other words, as long as leaders of religious groups stay away from matters which do not fall within the scope of religion, they would save themselves a lot of troubles arising from their meddling with irrelevant matters. It is noted that the New Testament also recorded when the apostles asked Jesus whether taxes should be paid to Caesar, the then governing authority, Jesus' answer was: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". By knowing how to handle matters which are beyond the scope of religion, or by staying away from these matters, religions naturally would be able to avoid being dragged into conflicts which should have been unrelated to religion.

Matters so-called outside the scope of religion do not necessarily have to be negative. For example, charity generates tremendous benefits to our society. But even for matters which could be the best thing for our society, it is still relevant how, or whether they fall within the scope of religion and should not be mixed up. Otherwise, trouble may brew from jealousy.

No matter one's understanding on the subject of religion, it is hoped that upon reading these 5 questions (and answers), one would understand that with a small change of perspective on religion, realizing the distinction of matters falling within and outside the scope of religion, conflicts surrounding religions would be reduced. Perhaps this may be one of the religious reforms in the foreseeable future.

Thus, we have provided an answer to the very interesting and difficult question of how religion would evolve in the near future.