

# Views on Religion Handout

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## Instructions

Below there are four different sources of different views around whether religion *unites* or *divides* people:

- 1 General online comment**
- 2 Newspapers**
- 3 Academics**
- 4 Someone in your own circle**

In small groups, use the questions on the PowerPoint (copied below) to work through each of the sources, thinking critically about this information and how you engage with it. You can make notes on this handout or separately.

- What do you think of this opinion?
- What is this person's worldview? Do we know?
- What part of this is factual? Which parts can we fact-check?
- Is there any bias here? Why / where / how?
- Is any of their language harmful?
- How does this match what you usually hear?

## 1 General online comment

Religion is dead. No one spreads love and compassion through religion anymore. It's a tool for spreading hate and destruction. Religion is a division created by unhappy people.

1:06 PM · Apr 20, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Culture divides and religion unites



12:45 PM · Apr 18, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)


Religion is division so be wise



2:03 AM · Apr 24, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Religion literally unites people...

9:53 AM · Apr 21, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)


  **76% Say Yes**



**24% Say No**  

**It makes people believe that some are better than others** - Religion influences children and their upbringing: children are indoctrinated in certain belief systems and are not given freedom to choose for themselves

- Religion gives alibis for killing others without remorse
- Religious beliefs lead this world to the state of overpopulation and bring our planet to the tipping point
- Religions "comfort" people offering lies
- Religion allows slavery, misogyny, homophobia etc.

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**Pride, hatred, misdirected jealousy, envy, scorn, lies, and deceitfulness divide the world not religion.** Only a FOOL dwells on FOOLISH things!!!! The foundation of the world itself doesn't divide people even though there are 7 continents with oceans stretching all across the Earth. PEOPLE DIVIDE THE WORLD with their own RATIONALE, CORRUPT POLITICS, RACISM, PORNOGRAPHY, ROAD RAGE, ONLINE TROLLING TO CAUSE DISHARMONY, SOCIETAL CLASSES, PREJUDICE, EVIL EMPLOYERS, AND UNETHICAL WHORE DRIVEN CORPORATIONS.

Religion does NOT divide people. Religion separates the GOOD from the EVIL. So don't EVER say anything bad about religion if you know what's best for you. OWNED.

## 2 Newspapers

UK NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

The Telegraph

News Sport Business Opinion Money Life

### Religion has been dividing human society for 2,000 years, say scientists

Scientists have found religious ties did not bind early societies together as had previously been thought, but actually caused conflict

By Helena Horton 22 December 2015 • 4:42pm



Scientists found that religion caused conflict in early societies instead of uniting them | CREDIT: Photo: Rex

Whether religion is a good or bad force in the world has been a strong topic of debate for a very long time.

Scientists have claimed that religion has actually been dividing our society and causing conflict for more than 2,000 years.

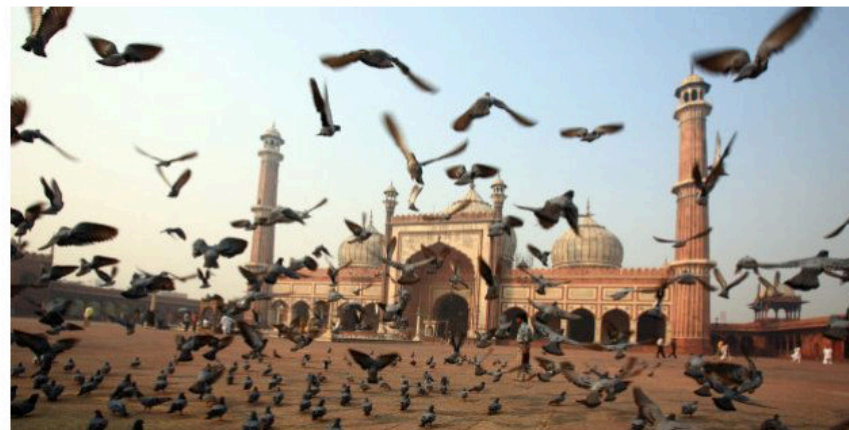
### Religion Unites Us, Fundamentalism Divides Us

The thing that unites us into an Indian identity, among others, is our shared element of deep-seated religiousness whatever be its outward colour or form. Indians are religious people. Religiousness is in the Indian air. Religiousness as a part of our national consciousness provides, inter alia the unity of commonality underlying the supernatant diversity. That which divides is fanaticism of different varieties.

By Suyash Saxena, Contributor

Research scholar at Centre for Law and Governance, JNU

Nov 2, 2015, 09:53 PM EST | Updated Jul 14, 2016



## 2 Newspapers

# How Religion Unites and Divides Us



Sahil Mathew · Follow

2 min read · Nov 6, 2017



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## Why do People Believe in Religion?

Religion has been around for many centuries and there are many reasons that people believe in religion. It can give people a feeling of community, or make people feel like they have a purpose in life. Some people believe in religion because they were born into it and their whole family is religious. These are all good reasons to believe in a religion, but there are also many bad aspects to religion. Religion can cause violence and wars and many people can die because of it. So, does religion unite us or divide us more?

## How does Religion Divide Us?

One way that the divide in religion affects us is with violence and wars. Many wars in history and in the present have been started because of religion. In



### 3 Academics

“Religion like anything... can go bad. You can have bad art and you can have bad religion. We just have a brilliant way of fouling things up... If we just put it down as a dangerous thing or say there’s some inherent bias in Islam that pushes people towards [violence] – no more is that true in Islam that it is of secularism, Christianity, Judaism. Any ideology – be it religious or secular – has its fanatics. Christianity has behaved atrociously in the past, and indeed has secularism. We often talk about the wonderful tolerance of secularism and its love of freedom... but in fact it’s been very violent in its short history too. And that’s not to deny that the ideals of secularism are excellent, but they have been interpreted in an extremely brutal way... I do think that over time, religion, like art, like so many other ideologies has enriched human life, as well as damaged it.”

**Karen Armstrong**

**Author, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN3wkG1s4TA>

“Journalist Karen Armstrong... says it’s too easy in a sense to say [violence] is based on faith or religion but it’s the intersection of faith and religion with politics, or nationalism, or historical grievances. That it’s not the religion itself...

I think any kind of identity politics can have that affect and nationalism [can drive it]... but religion is extremely powerful in doing this because children are indoctrinated in religion from a very young age and they have this fanatical loyalty which is instilled into them from a very young age... political motivation is often important... but the role of religion is to identify which party you belong to... religion ferments hostility against the other side.”

**Richard Dawkins**

**Evolutionary biologist and well-known atheist**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6U0Bvsrn8o>

#### **4 Someone in your own circle:**

**a friend / family member / local politician / religious leader**

Share some stories about people in your circle who have an opinion on this matter. Choose one to work on together and list some key points of their argument, before moving to the questions.