

Religious Antecedents of Secularisation, and Secularist Consequents on Religion: Insights from Social Sciences

Sahaya G. Selvam, sdb



Logical Versus Empirical Reasoning

1. Earth is Flat
2. Why do we see the mast of the ship at the horizon?
3. It is because light travels in a curve



Methodology of the Paper

What type of
Reasoning?
Deductive
Reasoning

Does Logical
Reasoning alone
lead to the
Truth?

Empirical Evidence is
Needed!

Does philosophy
have the means to
gather empirical
evidence?

So, philosophy has
to rely on Physical
Sciences and Social
Science!!

Therefore, my paper relies
on social sciences for
empirical data

The Scope of My Paper

Two ways of relating to matters of Ultimate Concern

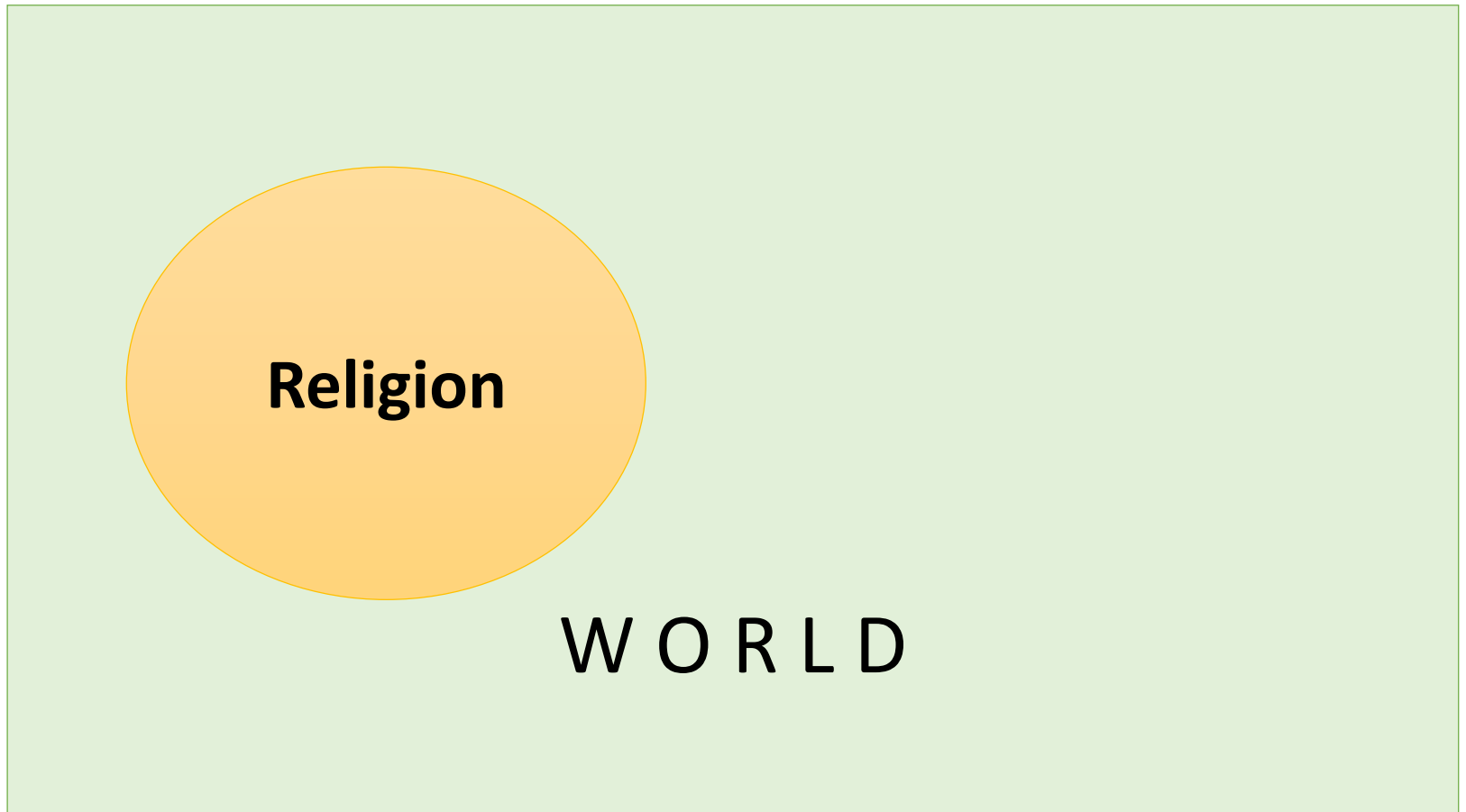


Religion

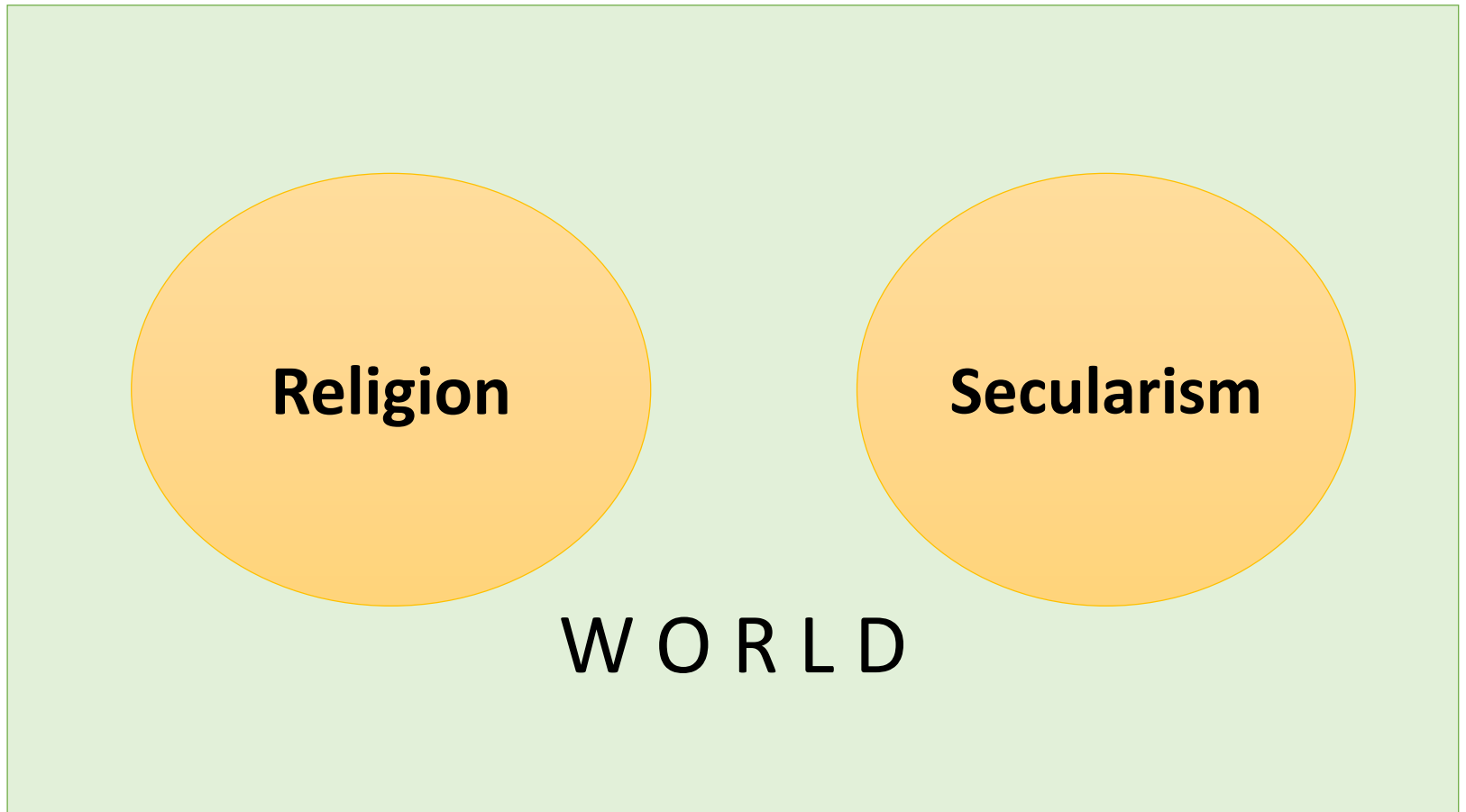
Secularism

WORLD

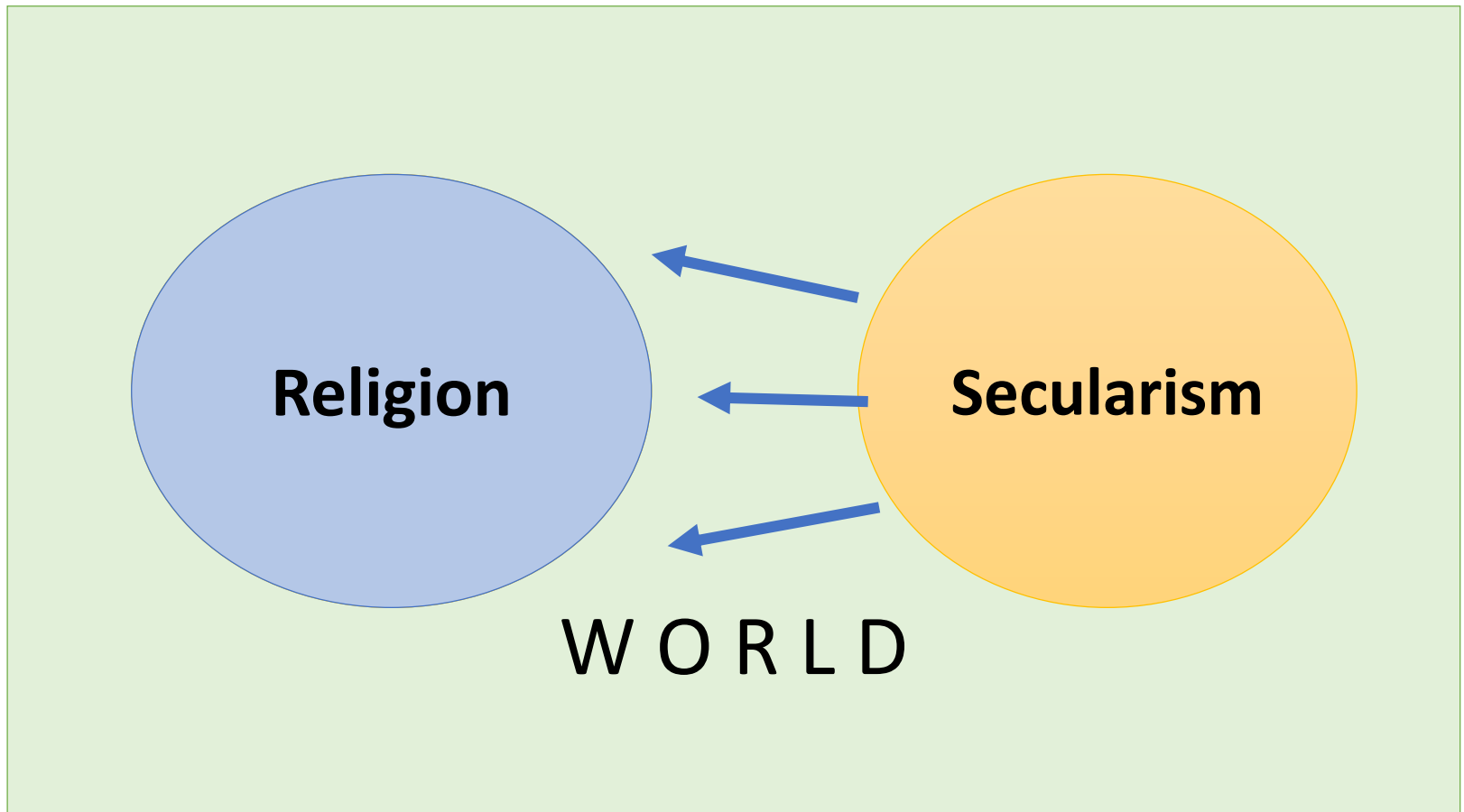
Religious Antecedents of Secularism



Religious Antecedents of Secularism



Secularist Consequents on Religion



Watershed Events

1517
Lutheran
Reformation

1632
The case
of Galileo

1789
French
Revolution

1760-1830
Industrial
Revolution

Urbanisation

Secularism and Secularisation

Non-
interventionalist
secularism

Non-
discriminatory
secularism

Secularisation
Social Attitude
and Lifestyle

2. Religious Antecedents of Secularisation

2.1. *From Absolutisation of Religious Truth-Claims to Pure Rationalism*

Religious Truth and Truth-Claims

Truth is.

But many are the ways humans perceive it.

God is.

But many are the ways humans experience God. Our perceptions and experiences give rise to **truth-claims.**

Characteristics of Religious Truth-Claims

John Macquarrie (1919-2007)

1

It is multiform
Unlike empirical truths

2

It has a personal dimension
Takes place when it is appropriated by someone.

3

Culturally and historically conditioned
Conditioned by language and culture.

The Trial of Galileo (1633)



Galileo Galilei

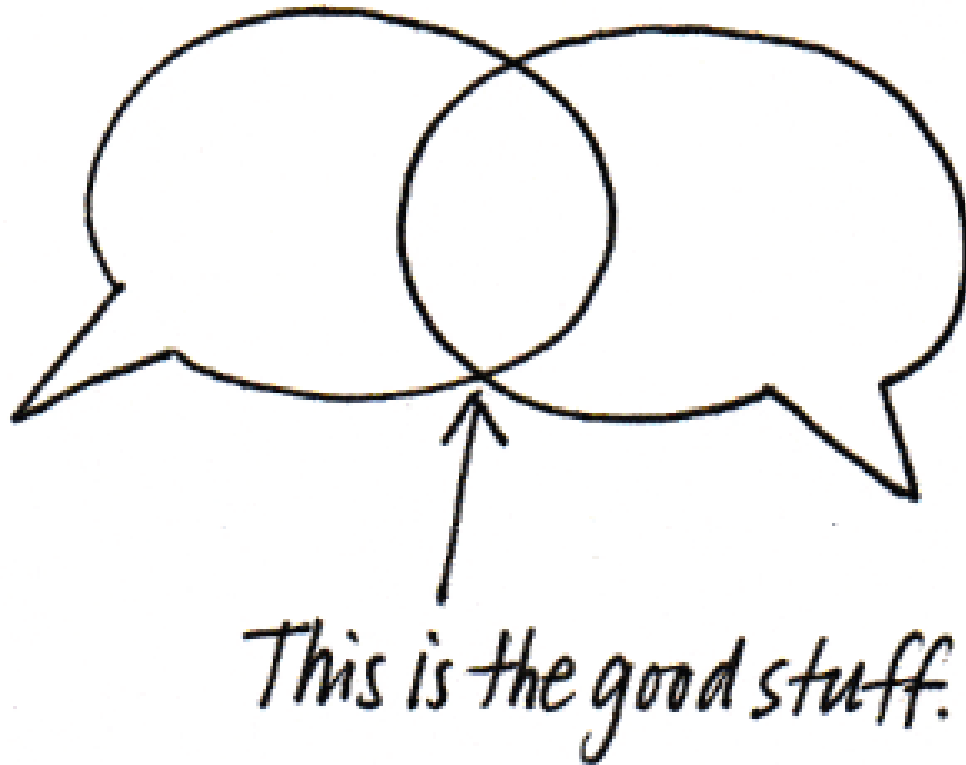


“The Bible was written to tell us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go”

“In discussions of physical problems we ought to begin not from the authority of scriptural passages, but from the sense-experiences and necessary demonstrations.”

Truth and Meaning

Religious truth-claims provide meaning to the mysteries of life.



2. Religious Antecedents of Secularisation

2.2. *From Fossilisation of Religious Symbols to Loss of Sense of Symbols*

Religious Symbols

Mysteries.








Can be dealt with through Meaning Systems
Symbols provide meaning systems.

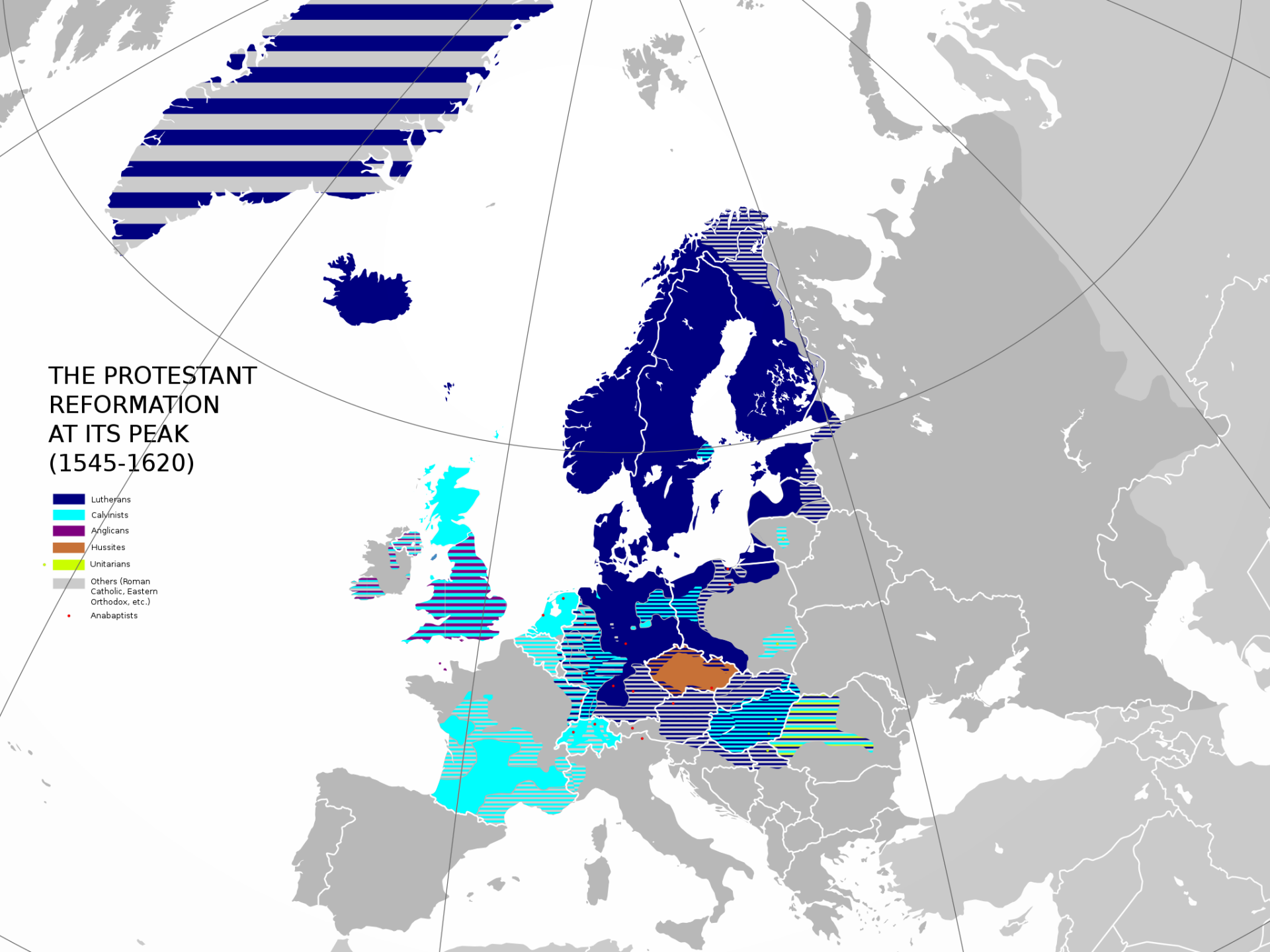
Problems.

Problems have solutions.

Signs provide solutions

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AT ITS PEAK (1545-1620)

-  Lutherans
-  Calvinists
-  Anglicans
-  Hussites
-  Unitarians
-  Others (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, etc.)
-  Anabaptists





Fruits of the urban life



God-Images?



CR



CR

WHAT IS GOD?

Mary Douglas (1921-2007)



“One of the gravest problems of our day is the lack of commitment to common symbols... Ritual has become a bad word signifying empty conformity. We are witnessing a revolt against formalism... We find ourselves, here and now, reliving a worldwide revolt against ritualism” (Douglas, 1970, p.1).

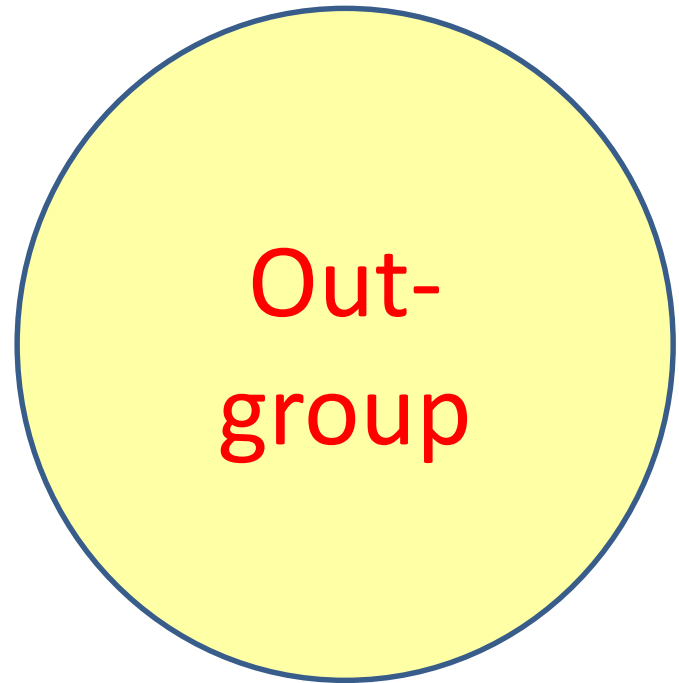
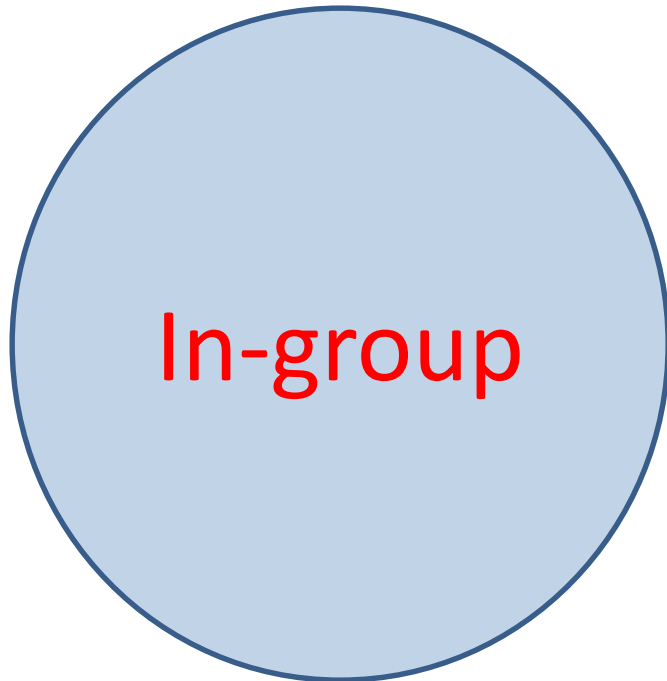
Identity question

- Pair up with your neighbour!
- Ask them 10 times: Who are you? They have to give meaningful answers?
- Exchange roles.
- Stop & Relax!
- **Analyse:** how many of your answers were associated to groups that you belong to: religion, ethnic group, religious congregation, etc



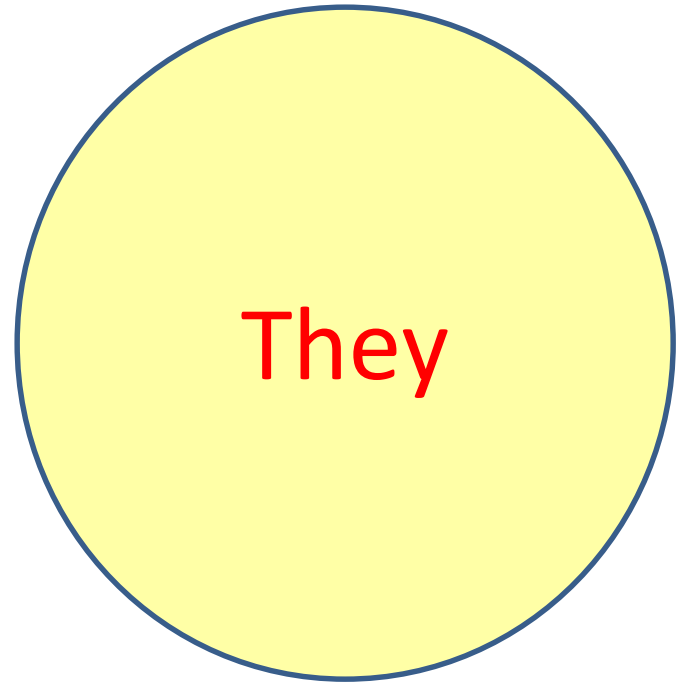
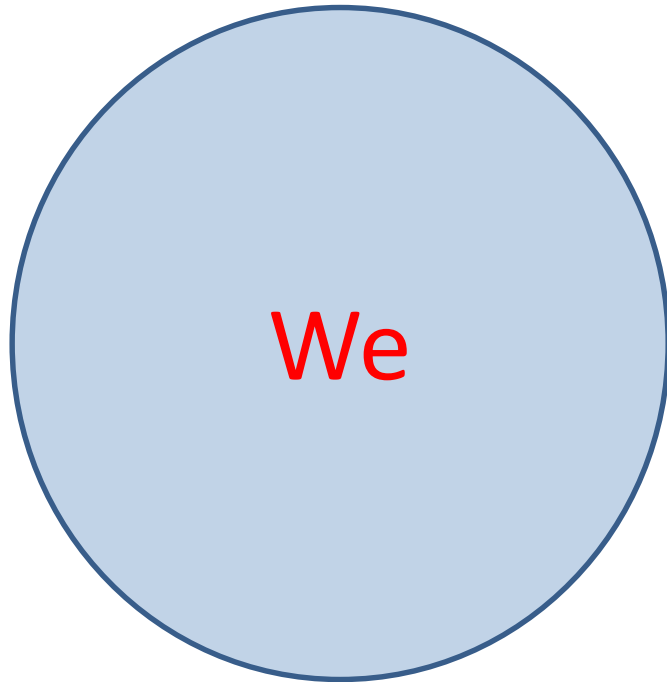
2. Religious Antecedents of Secularisation

2.3. *From Religious Authoritarianism & fanaticism to Liberalism*



Social Psychology

Social Psychology



Social Psychology




In-group
Favouritism



Out-
group
bias

Social Psychology in Religion



We have
the truth!
Revelation



They
have
myths!

Social Identity Theory

- The groups we belong to tell us something about who we are, and we may feel that we have some prestige from being part of the group.



Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, pp.33-47.

Religion & Social Identity

“The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice. While the creeds of great religions are universalistic, all stressing brotherhood, the practice of these creeds is frequently divisive and brutal. The sublimity of religious ideals is offset by the horrors of persecution in the name of these same ideals... Some people say the only cure for prejudice is more religion; some say the only cure is to abolish religion” (Allport, *Man and his religion*, 1954, p.444)

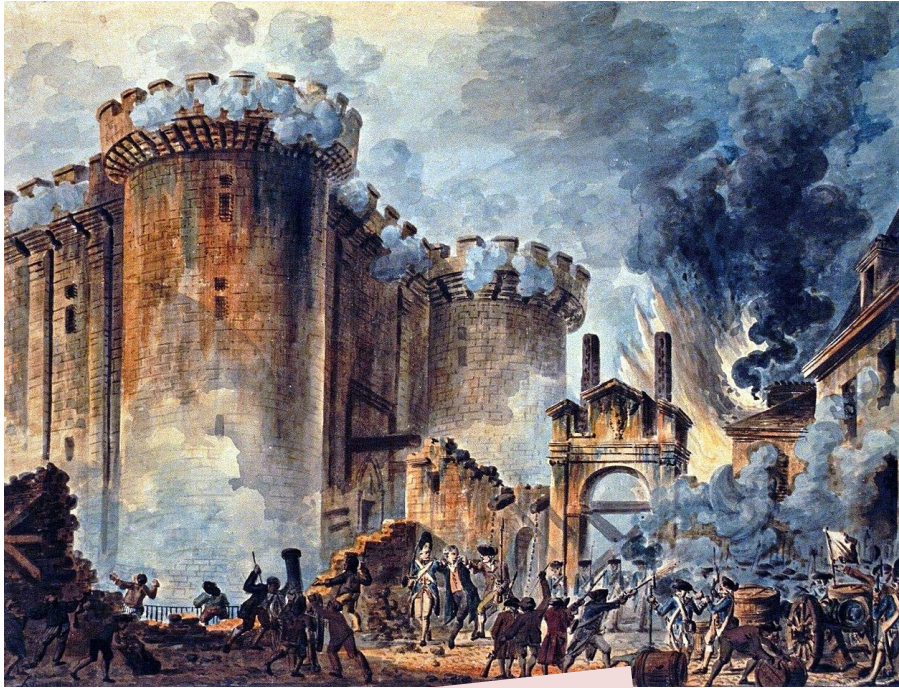
Lutheran Reformation



French Revolution (1789)



French Revolution (1789)



Liberté,
égalité,
fraternité.



AUX REPRESENTANS DU PEUPLE FRANCOIS

“[I]n modern Western history, of course, secularization manifests itself in the evacuation by the Christian Churches of areas previously under their control or influence – as in the separation of church and state, or in the expropriation of church lands, or in the emancipation of education from ecclesiastical authority.”

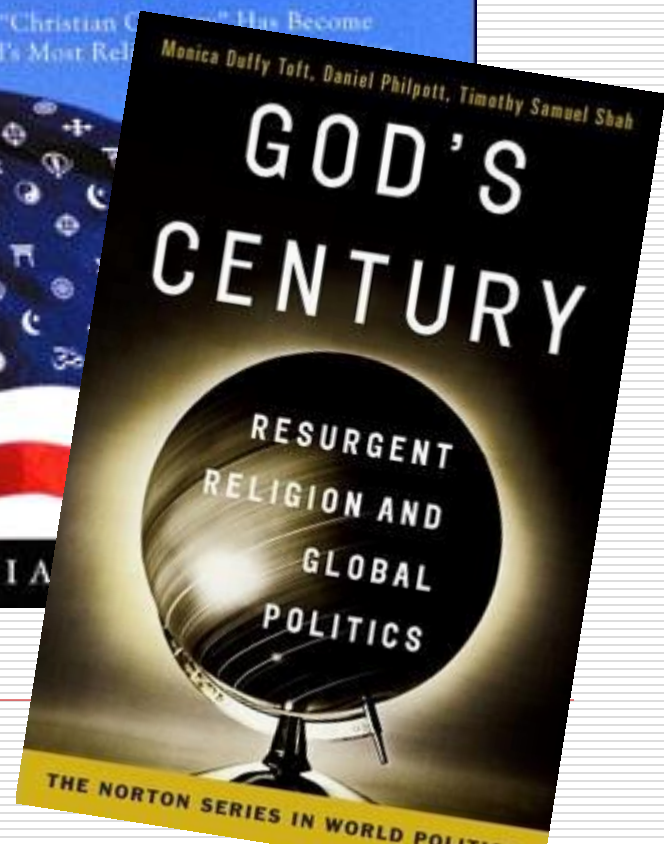
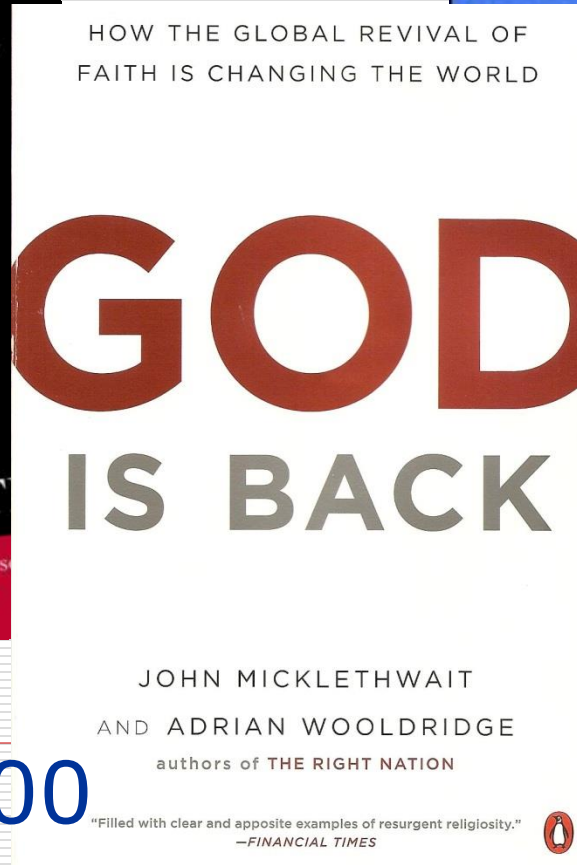
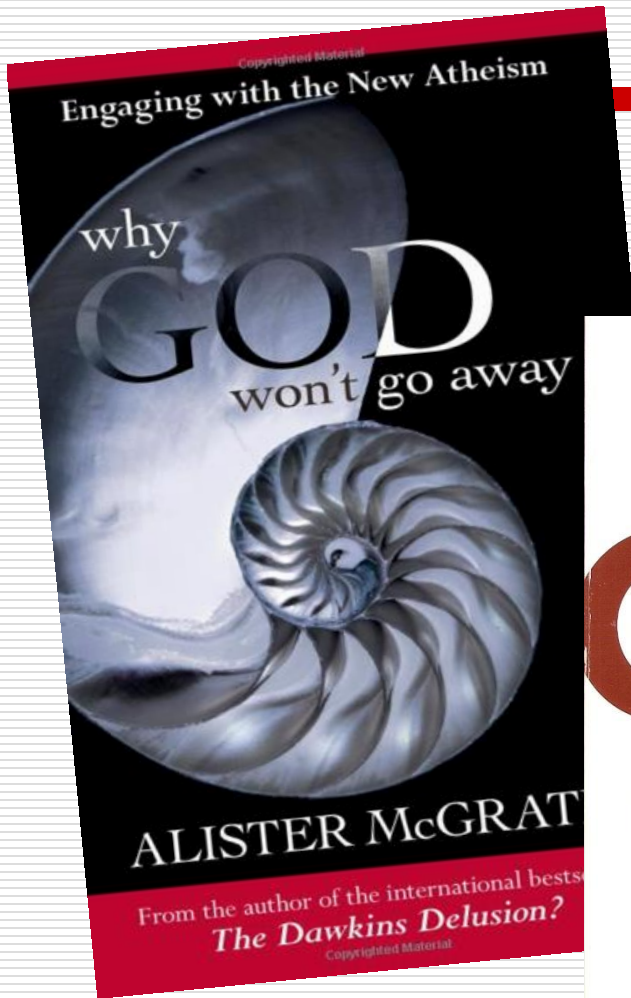
Berger, The Sacred Canopy, 1967



“The world today, with some exceptions... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken.”

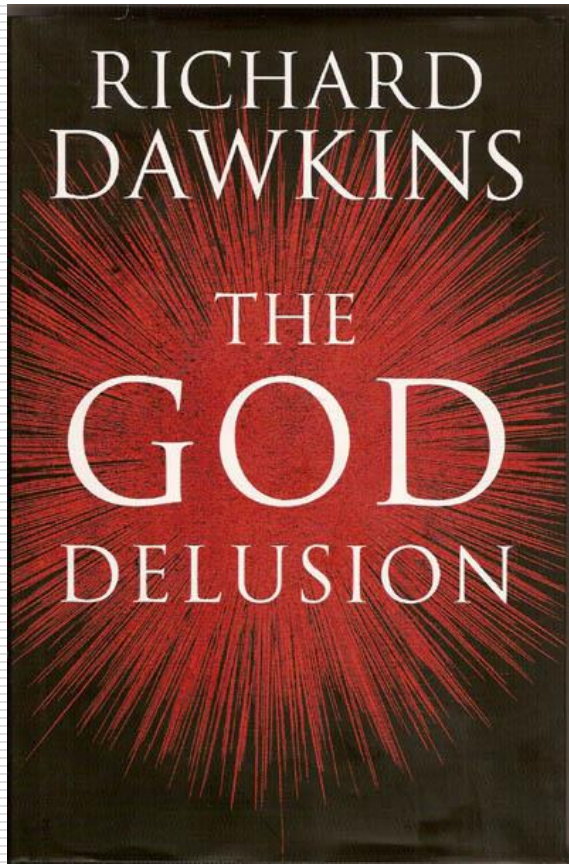
Berger, Peter L. "The desecularization of the world." Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center (1999).

Secularism: Death of God?

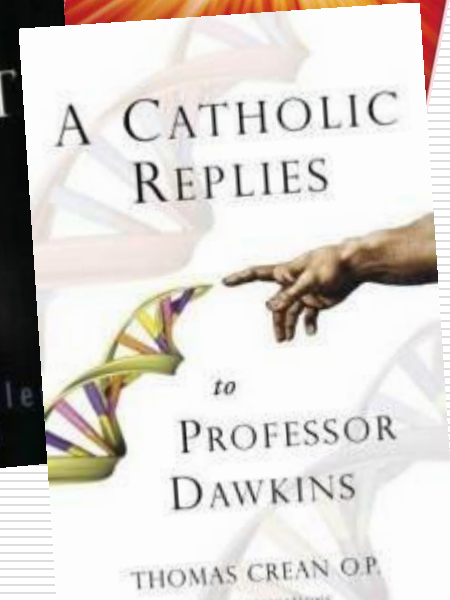
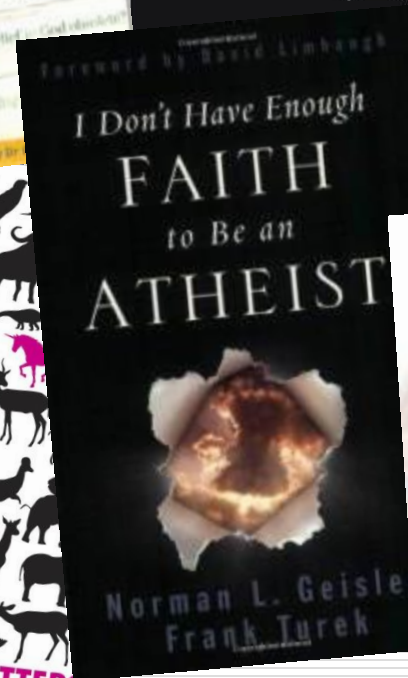
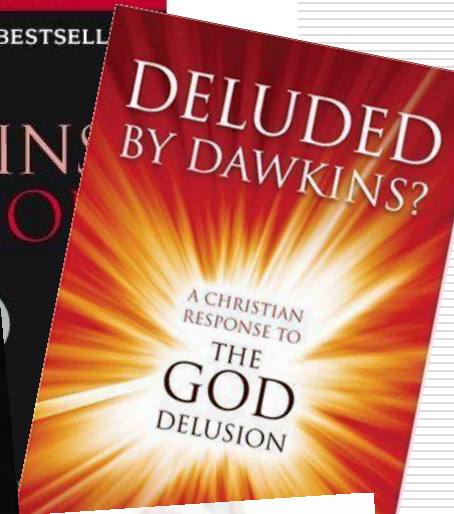
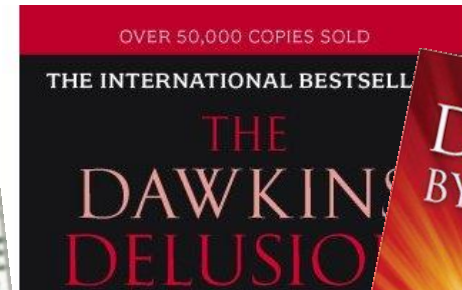
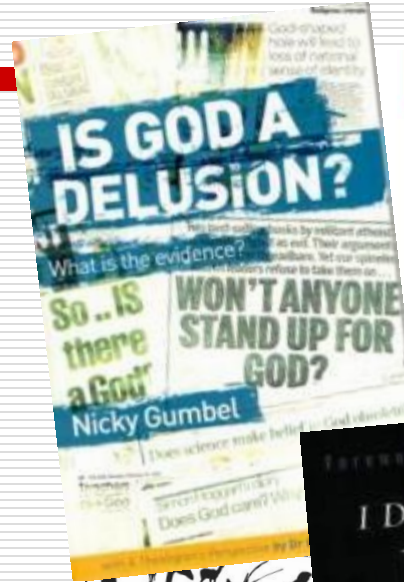


Since 2000

Secularism: Death of God?



2006

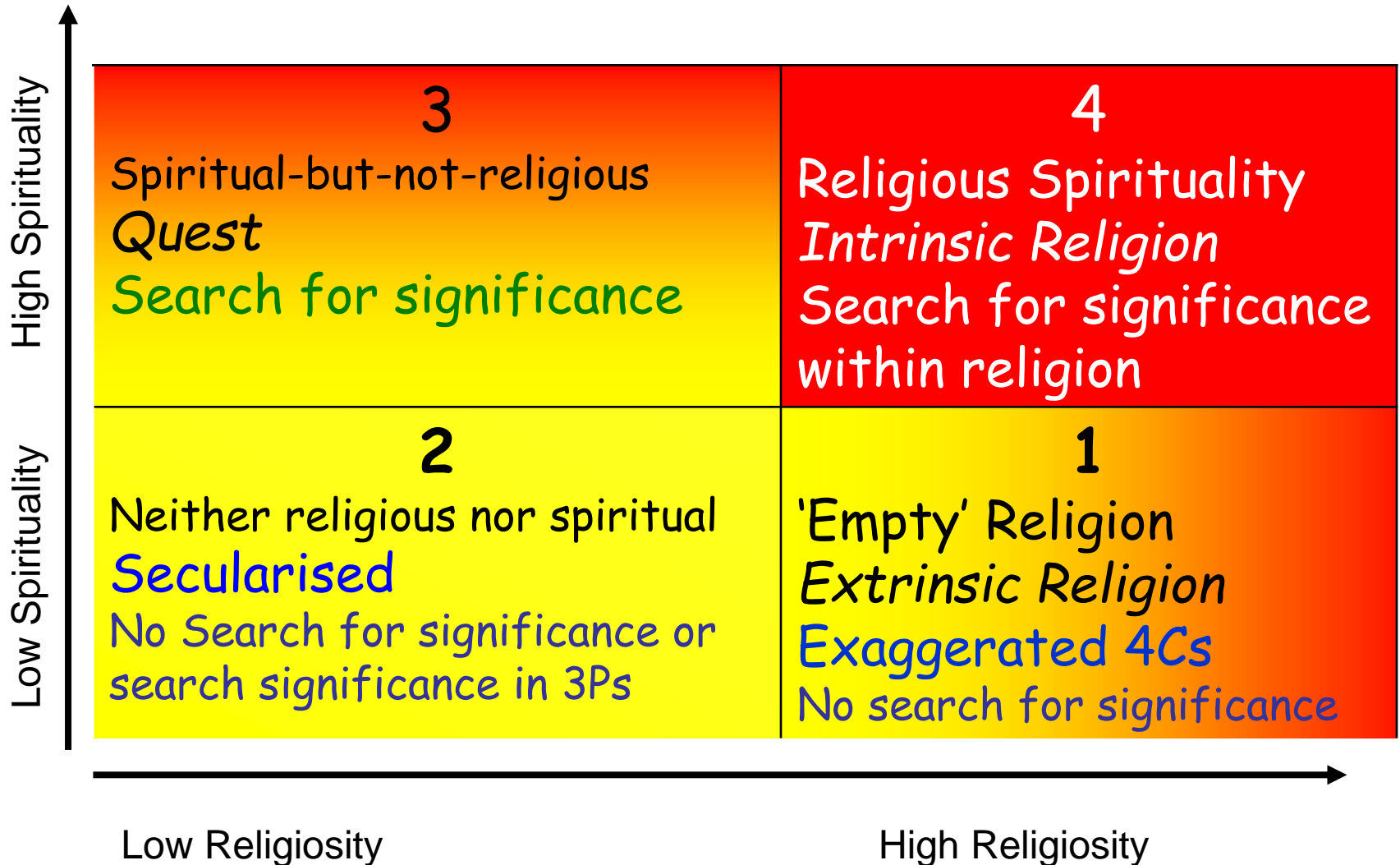


3. Secularist Consequents on Religion

3.1. *Spirituality apart from Religion*



Religion & Spirituality



3. Secularist Consequents on Religion

3.2. *Religious Tolerance and Fundamentalism*



Increased
Religious
Tolerance



Increased
Fundamentalism

3. Secularist Consequents on Religion

3.3. *Virtue-based Ethics*



Values of Secular-Ethics

Truth: “based on observation and evidence rather than on mere faith.

Equality: “secular people are fundamentally suspicious of all a priori hierarchies.”

Freedom: “to think, investigate and experiment.”

Courage: it takes courage to fight all biases and oppressive regimes.

Responsibility: instead of waiting for a higher power to solve world’s problems we need to take responsibility to deal with them.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF **SAPIENS**

Yuval Noah
Harari



21 Lessons
for the
21st Century

Values in Action: Catalogue of CS



VIA SURVEY

CHARACTER STRENGTHS ▾

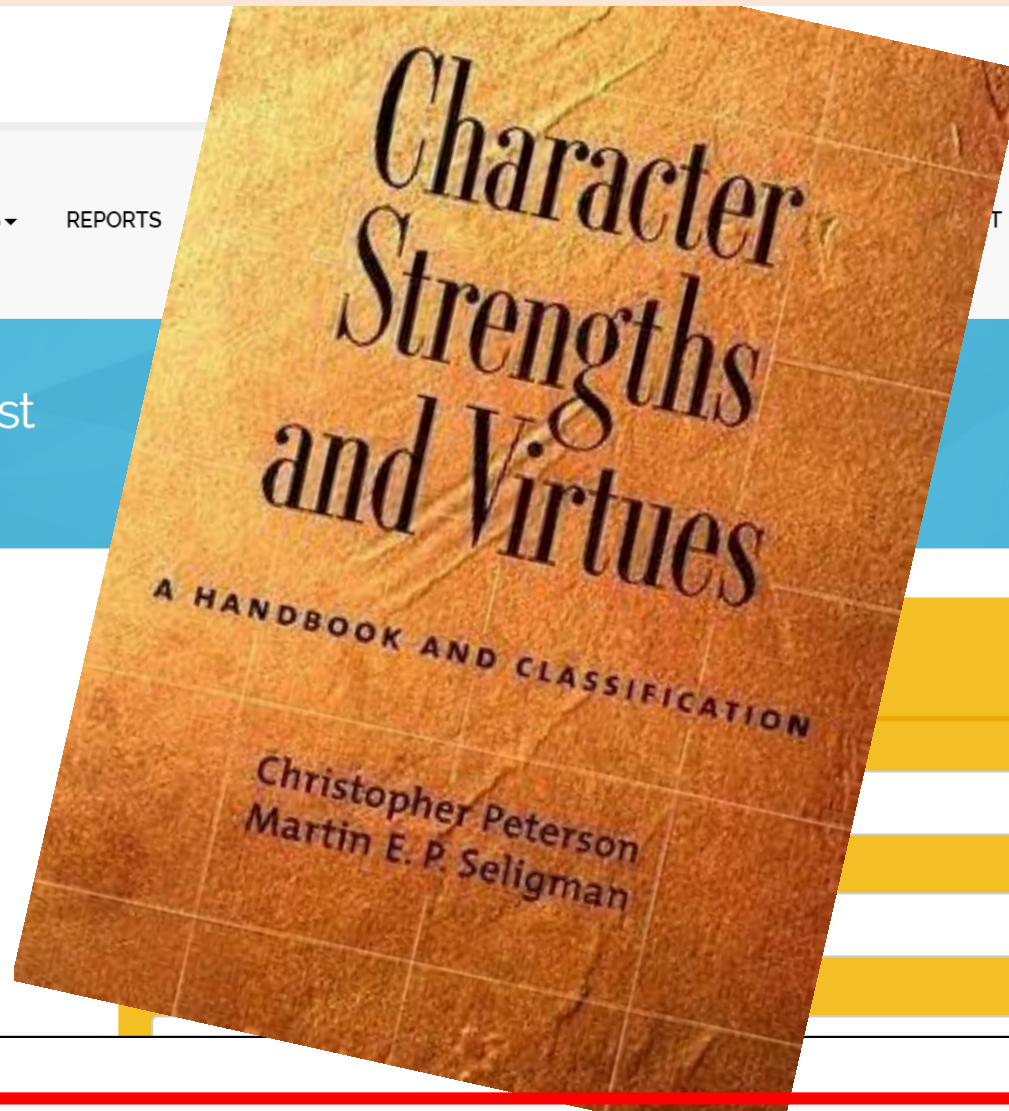
REPORTS

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Values in Action: Catalogue of CS

- | |
|--|
| CS1. Creativity (originality, ingenuity) |
| CS2. Curiosity (interest, novelty-seeking) |
| CS3. Open-mindedness (critical thinking) |
| CS4. Love of Learning |
| CS5. Perspective (wisdom) |
| CS6. Bravery (valour) |
| CS7. Persistence (perseverance)) |
| CS8. Integrity (authenticity, honesty) |
| CS9. Vitality (zest, enthusiasm, energy) |
| CS10. Love |
| CS11. Kindness |
| CS12. Social Intelligence |



Values in Action: Catalogue of CS

CS13. Citizenship (social responsibility)

CS14. Fairness

CS15. Leadership

CS16. Forgiveness and Mercy

CS17. Humility (modesty)

CS18. Prudence

CS19. Self-regulation (self-control)

CS20. Appreciation of beauty

CS21. Gratitude

CS22. Hope (optimism)

CS23. Humour (playfulness)

CS24. Spirituality (religiousness, faith)

Both/And Perspective

Integration

Rigidity

Fluidity

Continuity + Change = Integration

Questions for Group Discussion

1. What would be the functional/healthy reaction to secularist influence on religion?
2. Discuss in your own understanding the relationship between religion and spirituality?
3. What would be the future of religion and secularism in Africa?

