

## opinions &gt; sacreligious!

## Bringing up baby

What kind of religious education—if any—do kids need?

By **Kate Washington**

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"This is the church, this is the steeple ... "

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I want my daughter to be exposed to religion and both familiar with and tolerant of different belief structures—but I don't think I can go back to church for myself.

It's not a political thing. I mean, let's face it: Episcopalians are about as liberal as a religion gets. They ordain gay bishops! (And then they have schisms over it, but then maybe it's just a schism-happy sort of church, insofar as it started with a schism over the king's divorce.)

It's a matter of deep-seated agnosticism I can't believe my way out of. I'm still not really sure what the answer is. My husband was raised without a church upbringing, and he seems to have turned out fine (and also managed to get a Ph.D. in English, though he studies those godless modernists). His family discussed and tried out different churches and religions at different times, and maybe that's something we'll do when my daughter is older.

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CS Lewis Christian Reflections 1940 p. 23

# Evangelism

Why is it a dirty word?

# Evangelism imagined

- Binding happy and free people with externally imposed life sapping morality
- Cultural and religious imperialism
  - Killing native species
- Mind control, seeking converts to build one's own kingdom at their expense

# Evangelism practiced, and presupposed

- Given as “good advice” (or maybe not so good)
  - What you need to do
  - Who you need to serve
  - Where you need to give your time and money
- Giving you the problem then the solution
  - As if the drug pusher and rehab industry worked together!

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Ms. Washington is doing quite well it seems

- 2 PhDs in the house
- A daughter
- Farmer's market and the gym for Sundays

# Ms. Washington

- She certainly isn't concerned with hell
- The gym and Farmer's market express her world-saving values
  - Take care of your body, work out, fresh fruit and vegetables
  - Shop locally, save the planet
- Hubby did fine w/o religion (PhD)
- But the longing remains

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

CS Lewis, "The Weight of Glory"

# Ms. Washington

- Whatever her thoughts on hell, she has no answer for the age of decay
  - Her mind is only supported by an aging body
  - Her child will do what she wants
  - 100 years from now no one will care she had a PhD

# Luke 9

- Jesus sends out the twelve to announce and give “samples” of the age to come
- Stunning glimpses:
  - Feeding the 5000
  - Mount of Transfiguration
- Stunning failures
  - Power plus human corruption leads to squabbling, bickering, more suffering

# 3 strong statements

- Son of man, no place for his head
  - The age of decay does not value the age to come
- “let the dead bury their own dead”
  - Announcement of the age to come (kingdom of God) takes priority over every other agenda
- “No one who looks back is fit...”
  - If your heart remains locked onto your life in the age of decay you can't enter the age to come

## Luke 10:1-9 (ESV)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

# Changed from Luke 9:1

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# Urgency motivated by generosity!

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- The harvest... PRAY to the LORD to send out laborers
- Lambs in the midst of wolves
- “Peace to this house”... sons of peace
- The kingdom of God has come near to you!

# Kate has longing, but is not yet in touch with her misery

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# What is at the heart of her agnosticism?

“It’s a matter of deep-seated agnosticism I can’t believe my way out of. I’m still not really sure what the answer is.”

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# It's not fear that she needs but for her stomach to taste the kingdom coming near

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  - Think you can manage it all OK?
- Are you getting tastes of the kingdom draught?
  - Do you see that your unbelievable fortune came at his unbearable expense?
- Can you approach Kate with generosity?