

opinions > sacreligious!

Bringing up baby

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

By **Kate Washington**

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This article was published on **11.20.08**.

Once upon a time, I was an Episcopalian. I went to church every Sunday (well, pretty much), sang along enthusiastically with the hymns, loved the acrid-sweet fog of incense.

I also went to Sunday school, got homesick and danced to Billy Idol at a church-run summer camp at Lake Tahoe every year, and later joined youth group. I remember snipping felt and gold braid into elaborate costumes for a King David-related puppet show, hanging around at coffee hour for the cookies and feeling comforted by the recitation of the liturgy, every week the same, right down to the hissing "S" sounds of "trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer.

I was, in short, a pretty devout kid. But along the way, that changed. I decided I couldn't really believe in the Resurrection, at least not literally, and if I didn't believe in that, maybe I didn't actually believe in the Bible, or, come to think of it, God. That led me to think that I probably shouldn't get confirmed.

So I didn't, and my church attendance dwindled over the years, until now I don't even do that Christmas Eve and Easter thing. I've always loved the midnight mass service, though, come to think of it, what I most loved was singing along to Christmas carols, where in the legions of voices nobody can hear it if I didn't quite hit the high note on "heavenly peace" in "Silent Night."

Heavenly peace or no, for the most part, I've pretty much been at peace with having drifted away from organized religion.

Now, though, my daughter is 3, and we go to the farmers' market and gym on Sunday mornings, not to services. I like both of those things, and I don't feel that I can in good conscience provide my daughter with the same kind of religious upbringing I had. It would be hypocritical of me; I'm not a believer myself, and I can't quite fake it for her.



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

<http://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/Content?oid=880788>

The grasp of Ahaz

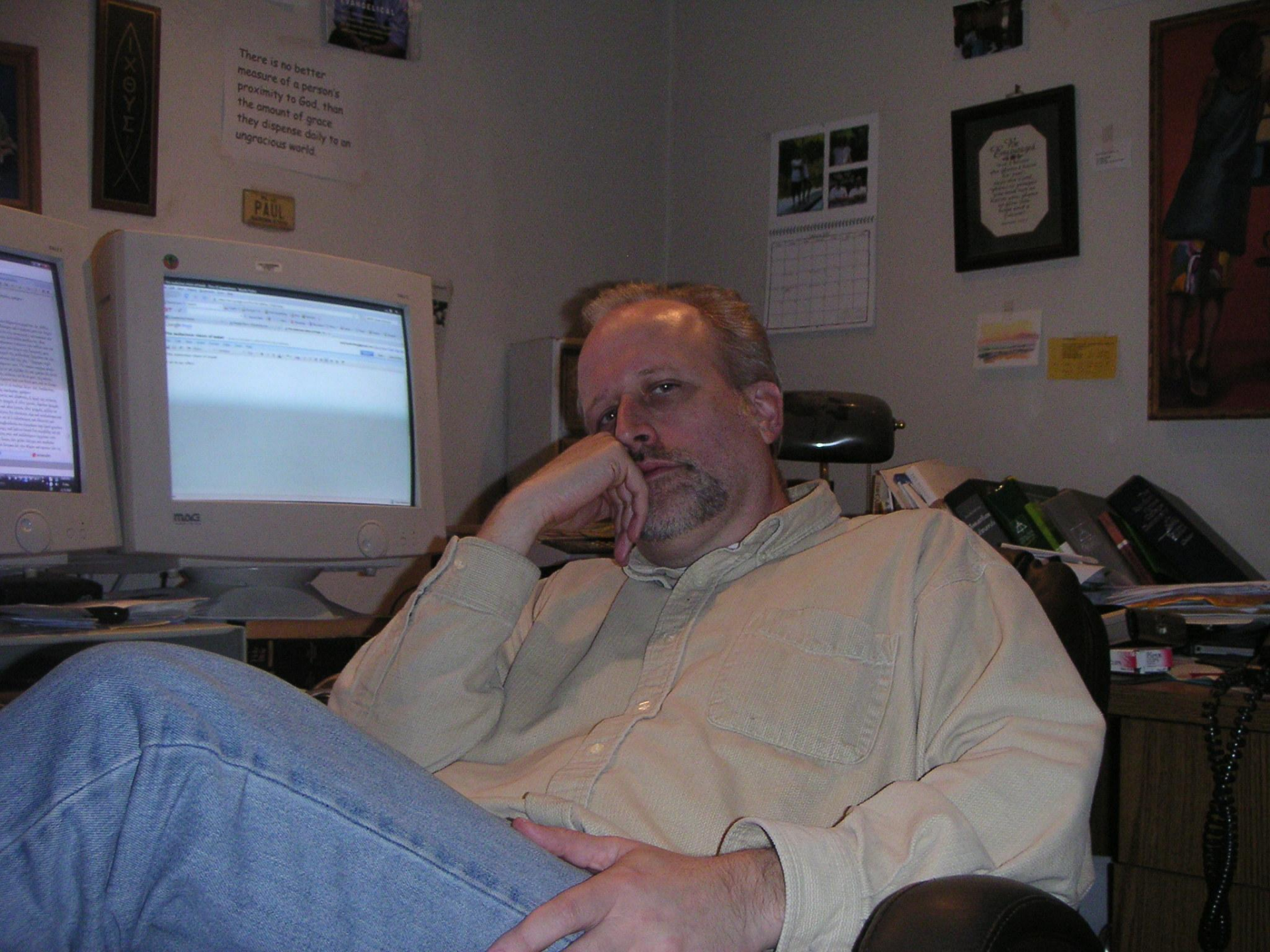
Isaiah 7:13-14

Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the maiden is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

- Heir of the house of David, ruler of Jerusalem
- Recipient of the promise of an everlasting kingdom

There is no better
measure of a person's
proximity to God, than
the amount of grace
they dispense daily to an
ungracious world.

PAUL



Luke 18:1-8 (NRSV)

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. **And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"**

In the beginning

- An innocent man and woman inhabited a perfect garden
 - They walked with God daily
 - They knew no pain or loss to the age of decay
- In that context when it was suggested that God couldn't be trusted, they rebelled.
 - What chance do we have?

Array of Challenges

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By Kate Washington

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- Blaming God for loss in the age of decay

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Once upon a time, I was a pious kid. I went to church every Sunday. Well, not to church, but I sang enthusiastically with the hymns, loved the acid-sweet fog of incense.

I also went to Sunday school. I remember dancing to Billie Holiday and singing in the choir at Lake Tahoe every year, and later joining a youth group. I remember snipping felt and gold braid into elaborate costumes for a King David-related puppet show, hanging around at coffee hours with my friends, and feeling comforted by the same hymns every week the same, right? I remember the sounds of "trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer.

I was, in short, a pretty devout kid. But along the way, that changed. I was a skeptic from the Resurrection, and I never believed in the things in the Bible, or, come to think of it, God. That led me to think that I probably shouldn't get confirmed.

So I didn't, and my parents were disappointed for the years, until now. I don't go to church on Eve and Easter things. I would like to go to a mass service, though, come to think of it, what I most loved was singing along to Christmas carols where in the legions of angels. I remember "This is the church, this is the people." I didn't quite hit the high notes, but I remember "Silent Night."

Heavenly peace or no, for the most part, I've pretty much been at peace with having drifted away from organized religion.

Now, though, my daughter is 3 and a half, and I'm not to services. I like both of those things, and I don't feel that I can in good conscience provide my daughter with the same kind of religious upbringing I had. It would be hypocritical of me; I'm not a believer myself, and I can't quite fake it for her.

- Difficulties of science and history

- Sheer weight of assumed unbelief

— Lethargy to resist the tide

- Simplicity of the direct and expedient

- Weariness of the soul as exhibited in

reduced expectations

— This is likely the deadliest of all!

Isaiah

- Prophet of Audacity
- When all is dark Isaiah doubles down!
- Isaiah 60

opinion

No mere "heavenly peace"

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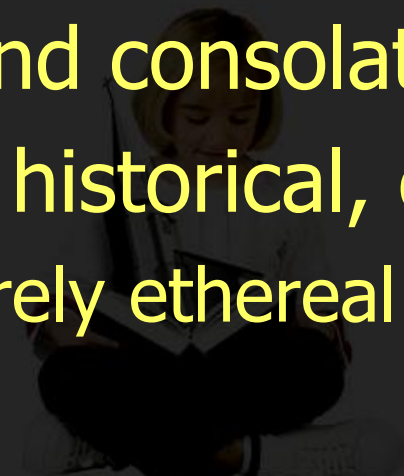
I also went to Sunday school, got hired to dance to Billy Idol at a tourist-run summer camp at Lake Tahoe every year, and later joined youth group. I remember snipping felt and gold braid into elaborate costumes for a King David-related puppet show, hanging around the altar for baptisms, and feeling a little bit like a churchgoer every week, right down to the hissing "trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer.

I was, in short, a pretty devout kid. But along the way, that changed. I came to realize that I didn't believe in the Resurrection, at least not the way I was taught, and I didn't believe in that, maybe I didn't actually believe in the Bible, or, come to think of it, God. That led me to think that I probably shouldn't get confirmed.

So I didn't, and my church attendance dwindled over the years, until now I don't even do that Christmas Eve and Easter thing. I've always loved the midnight mass service, though, come to think of it, what I most loved was singing along to Christmas carols, where in the legions of voices nobody can hear it if I didn't quite hit the high note on "heavenly peace" in "Silent Night."

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

- Complete reversal of fortune for a poor remnant abused and without options
- Far beyond consolation or restoration
- Material, historical, experiential, — Not merely ethereal

How will this come about?

- Nearly everything we do is motivated by our attempts to either save the world for ourselves or by ourselves
 - Politics
 - Religion
 - Science and Technology
 - Arts
 - Economics

How will it come about?

- Isaiah 61
- Accomplished by a man
- Not merely empire by force
- Isaiah 61:11 (NRSV)
 - For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Israel history

- Temple destroyed 586 BC
- Israel was given these audacious words with nothing to show for it by
 - Domination by foreign empires
 - Economic subjugation
 - War, catastrophe, exile, struggle to survive
- Yet the text endured?!

One more audacious comes

- He appropriates this text to himself
 - Luke 4
- He don't subjugate us, he invites us
- He doesn't just talk, he is raised!

Kate Washington is no dummy.

This is where it rises or falls!

Resurrection or no resurrection!

If none, face the terrible truth!



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

Why do I fret?

- I think it's up to me to save the world
 - Through getting people to believe the right things
- And I realize that I'm not up to the task
- I am powerless against the age of decay
 - I like Ahaz would prefer to be in control!

But one has come

- He came not to destroy, but to invite
- He came not to draw the blood of the evil ones but to give them life by his own blood
- He came not out of obligation, but out of love
- He will complete the task!

We are still here today!

