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In the last one hundred years, man has been able to achieve several feats that would have seemed nearly impossible before, man was able to create machines that could do all sort of tasks, and he was even able to go to the heavens. Man has also seen man and nature made disasters that have made them question if there truly is someone watching over them. The increase of knowledge and information in the world, along with natural and man made disasters are causing people to become less religious across the world. As the world continues to revolve around us, we continue to do what we have always done, and that is question everything we see in the world and that questioning has brought up some answers that question the validity of religion and it's importance in our lives in the 21st century.

The industrial revolution brought along with it the modern society, which by definition is "the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society." (Britannica). Before the Industrial revolution most education was only available through private schools that were mostly religious, but with the emergence of the industry, individuals' lives were completely dominated by labor. Families were forced to work all day and all week in order to earn enough money to provide a roof over their heads and food on the table. Families may have also began to question the importance and the power of religion, as families realized that God was not going to grant them a miracle and suddenly they would be rich, but rather everything they received was up to them. In this new era one could say that people's new religion was

labor, as it completely dominated every aspects of their lives. Man began to become a bit disengaged from religion, for this fast paced and time consuming era did not have time for religion.

The industrial revolution also played a more direct role in the secularization of the world. Questions regarding every aspect of the world began to be answered, no more was the answer that something occurred because of God. There was now a straightforward scientifically proven explanation for almost every answer. The secularization thesis states, “as nations progress through various stages, such as modernization and rationalization, religion increasingly loses its authority in all aspects of social life and governance” (Kendall). Finding answers to life’s most troubling questions was one of the major roles of organized religion, but its importance quickly diminished once man was able to figure out these questions by themselves. One quick note to acknowledge is that not everyone in the world is becoming secular, but rather they lie mostly in nations with high income that have gone through some period of industry that become more secular. Poorer nations in Latin American, for example, have experienced a resurgence in the religious population most likely attributed to the Pope being Argentinian (Pew). Secularization of the population is not an issue for every country, as it seems that it sticks to the more industrious and wealthier countries of the world.

Another reason for what seems like the disappearance of religion across the world is how others often perceive it. Parents today are having difficulties introducing their children to religion, being perhaps that the parents are not making it as important as it has previously been or because of how the kids perceive religion as a whole. Steve Bruce said, “As religion becomes increasingly a matter of free choice, it becomes harder to

persuade people...” (Bruce 24), Parenting in the last few decades has been more hands-off with many parents letting their children decide what they want to do with their lives. Kids in the twenty-first century for the most part, would rather play video games than read a religious text that tells them what they can and cannot do. Religion is very rarely seen on television so children are not as exposed to it making them less interested to pursue its teachings. This is called the Mere-exposure effect, the psychological phenomenon in which individuals begin to prefer one thing or become more intrigued by it through continuous exposure to it and familiarization (Encyclopedia). With many of the countries having media shy away from broadcasting religions, it is no surprise as to why the younger generations are showing no interest in learning more about religions and becoming religious themselves.

Throughout time, several of the major conflicts in history can be traced back to religion. Terrorist attacks, the Holocaust, and the other acts of genocide around the world can trace the roots of its action to religion, and this is another factor for the decrease in religious beliefs. Government and most of its people have made it their priority to create a secular state, in contrast to how religious states like Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan have acted recently with oppression of their women as well as public beheadings. These Governments do not separate politics and religion as two different things but rather as one, meaning outdated laws and rules from the Qur'an are still upheld (Theologian). Looking at a secular group such as the European Union means that the citizens of its countries can practice religion as they pleased without the state forcing it upon them (Theologian). Here again we could have the mere-exposure effect, as what people get to

see regarding religion in the media is horrendous acts committed by extremists, thus associating religions with acts of violence.

Corruption in religion can also be attributed to the secularization of the world. Countless times it has been seen in the news of a pedophile priest or clergy accepting bribes or stealing money. These newsflashes do nothing but paint a dark cloud over religion and gets family to shy away from it in fear that their families could fall victim to it. The rise of fundamentalism has also been an agent in the rise of secularization; this goes along with the public perception of religions. Thanks to groups such as ISIS, many, especially the younger generations, view religious followers as bloodthirsty murderers who commit heinous crimes in pursuit of their “religion”. Kids growing up in this era are going to associate these groups with what religion truly is, and make them believe that the only way that these acts of terrorism could end is with end of religion.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public life in 2012 (which surveyed 64 million American adults), the amount of people that do not identify with a single religion has been increasing at rapid rate throughout the last few years. That report, while alarming, does not tell the whole story and actually sheds some light on the belief that everyone is becoming more secular. In the same survey from the Pew Forum, 68 percent answered that they do believe in God, and one out of five stated that they pray every day. While those numbers are not as high as they most likely have been in the past, it does show that there are still several people that still hold on to their religions and people are not as secular as the numbers first tell. We are not going to church, temple, or any of other religious sight as often as in the past but it seems that religion does still play a role in the lives of many.

While the world has become secular, as the last paragraph states, that does not mean that individuals do not believe in anything. According to the Pew research, six in ten Americans say that they have “spiritual peace and well-being”, so perhaps it is not that religions are disappearing but rather this is the religion of the new era we are in. The same report states that they have “wonder about the universe.” This closely parallels the religion of the olden days where we pursued it in hopes of answering questions about the world around us. While this “new religion” does not seem to have a text or a list of do’s and don’t’s, this new belief does hit several of the key points of religion. We did not lose our faith in religion, but rather just as our world is ever changing and evolving, so does religion.

The world has become far more secular as of late than it had ever been in the past. No longer does religion control every aspect of people’s lives. What has caused this transformation towards secularization is the change brought to everyday life brought by the industrial revolution, the change in the family dynamic, the corruption of the religious groups, and sadly, the extremist religious groups that commit atrocious acts. Belief in the core religions has diminished, but that does not mean that people are not as religious anymore as it seems as if a new spiritual and more personal religion is emerging. With this emergence it looks like we will have to find a new, different way to calculate truly how many people are still religious.

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