

Introduction

Good morning. You are listening to The Nexus, the most controversial show on radio. I'm Sankara Saranam, the author of God Without Religion. You can visit me at godwithoutreligion.com. God Without Religion is a multi-award winning book that the centralized authorities hope you never read. No callers! Owen (323) 815-0130

12 My Comments/News

Today, we have someone on the show who I consider to be a centralized authority himself. Father Peter Ingwe. Father Ingwe does not represent the Catholic Church. He wanted me to stress that fact before the interview, and that he is representing only his understanding of Church doctrine.

S: Father Ingwe, welcome to the show.

F: Thanks for having me.

S: Let's just jump right into it, Father. Why is condom use evil?

Father: Because the purpose of sex is to have babies. There's no other purpose to it. And obviously if you're using a condom, you're less likely to have a baby, which means you're having sex for some other, meaning misguided, purpose. That purpose is basically evil.

S: Well, I can think of other purposes to sex other than procreation, but I'll grant you that that is how Mother Nature sees sex – for procreation. But let me ask you, what's the purpose of eating food?

F: Seems to me it's to satisfy hunger and nourish the body, and eating for other reasons is evil too. Sex for other reasons is lust, and eating for other reasons is gluttony. The punishment of sin is death.

S: But if sexual desire is like a hunger, then having sex is similar to a satisfying event. So sex can be done to satisfy sexual desire, not necessarily for having a baby. Right?

F: Well, it can be done for that, but....

S: So why should I suppress my sexual desire and have it come out in violent ways, perhaps even misogyny, when I can healthy express it and satisfy it, even if I don't necessarily want to procreate?

F: We don't want it to come out in unhealthy ways either. People should express it. They should express it and have lots of babies.

S: And if they don't want lots of babies?

F: Well, something is wrong with them then. God commands us to be fruitful and multiply.

S: Yeah, but even if someone believes that, hasn't the human race already fulfilled that commandment many times over?

F: We have, but it's an ongoing command.

S: Ok, so how many billions of people does your god want?

F: The more, the better.

S: Last I checked this is a finite planet. How can more always be better when civilization after civilization in the past died out because of precisely overpopulation and the concurrent depletion of resources and ecological devastation?

F: Just because the effects of overpopulation...er, I mean, um, there really is no such thing as overpopulation, I misspoke...just because following god's commands sometimes leads to certain effects doesn't mean we don't follow the command.

S: It's not been only one philosopher or theologian that pointed out that these so-called commandments of God are actually observations of the way things are. For example, the myth that Adam and Eve became aware of their nudity: This is just an observation that human beings cover their bodies, unlike any other animal. Similarly, it's not that God commanded to have lots of babies, but it's just an observation that we are instinctively compelled to procreate for our continued survival. And if seen in that way, more is not better.

Overpopulation has already led to the demise of previous societies and when we have too many babies and it threatens our very survival, it goes against the very purpose of procreating. In a matter of speaking, having too many babies goes against your god's command because multiplying, after a while, is not very fruitful.

F: Well, you can think that, and I know some thinkers have interpreted the Bible in that way, but that is not my interpretation or the interpretation of the church. God didn't say be fruitful and multiply but watch out for overpopulation.

S: Actually, this Yahweh says be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. Well, we've replenished the earth. Do you guys have some spaceship in the Church docks, like Battlestar Galactica, and plan on sending off a few billion humans to replenish another world?

F: [laughs] Ah, no... S: So???

F: There is plenty of space to fill yet.

S: Oh, so are you going to volunteer to live in the Sahara Desert? This is an issue of resources, which are finite, not to mention waste product, which increases exponentially with increased population.

F: If population is causing these troubles, then we need to find ways to live which will allow billions more to survive and thrive.

S: You still aren't addressing the issue, which is that this is a finite world. Moving toward infinite babies has and will have disastrous consequences that will affect our ability to keep the earth replenished.

F: Again, we are not concerned with the consequences. We only care about following the command.

S: And if the consequence is that people eventually realize that these commands, at least the way you are interpreting them, are counterintuitive and it means the end of public interest in the Church?

F: Well, the Church changes its interpretations when that happened.

S: Wake up, Father. People are realizing the severe limitations in your theology every day. Can you change your interpretation now? You're not torturing people with the Iron Maiden anymore, you changed your mind about the Inquisition and Pogroms. Can you change it about this?

F: It's not up to me. Those who make these decisions in the church can take up this issue if they are inspired to do so.

S: OK, but I'm asking you to think for yourself here and change your mind, now that I've made a compelling argument. I can have sex to satisfy the hunger for sex without wanting a baby. I can also have sex to connect with someone I love. Right? I don't see how either can be construed as evil. In fact, since suppression leads to wrongdoing, I would say that teaching vulnerable people ideals that are practically the same as suppression is the real evil.

F: You can't argue based upon possible consequences like suppression. Again, we are not concerned with the consequences of following commands. We just follow them without question.

S: But when the consequence is the decline of the Church, it mattered.

F: It would, but we aren't there yet, despite the church's loss of power in the last several centuries. Also, back to your point, I don't think Nature is too concerned about two people falling in love. I think people experience that because Nature instills that feeling in the hope that people will eventually get around to having sex and babies. So, even falling in love has the ultimate purpose of procreating, and so if people are using a condom, they won't be procreating most likely and they are going against both God and Nature.

S: OK, then let me ask you this. A man and a woman meet. A few days later after getting to know each other, they decide they want to have a baby together. So, they start having sex to have a baby. Anything wrong with that?

F: Well, sure. They aren't married.

12 Minutes Guest/Skit/Callers/E-mails

You are listening to The Nexus, the most controversial show on radio. I'm Sankara Saranam, the author of the multi-award winning God Without Religion. Visit me at godwithoutreligion.com

S: Hold on, you can't tell me Nature recognizes marriage. If it doesn't care about two people falling in love, but sees that as the means to the end of procreation, then marriage is certainly superfluous as far as Nature goes because a man and a woman can have a baby without being married. Nature doesn't care about written contracts.

F: I can't use the Nature argument for marriage, but marriage is God ordained, so a man and a woman have to be married before they can have sex and have babies.

S: Well, we know people can have sex and can have babies without being married, so that's false.

F: Right, I mean they have to be married before they can have babies and sex that is legitimized by God.

S: Have you ever met an illegitimate baby?

F: I've seen them, sure.

S: And do they look any different to you than so-called legitimate babies?

F: Not to my eyes, but they do in the eyes of God.

S: Which God?

F: My God.

F: How do you know?

S: Because we have the words of God in the Bible.

S: You have words. You have to first decide they are God's. You then have to interpret them. Why not change gods, or change the interpretation of the words you ascribe to your god? Why look on a child as worthy or not worthy in your God's eyes?

F: That's not for me to decide. That's for leaders higher in the church. If they change their interpretation of the Bible to see babies born out of wedlock as legitimate in the eyes of God, then I would too.

S: So you are basically saying that sex is for procreation and only for procreation, and that the only legitimate sex is the sex that is legitimized by God. So here's my question: Since animals seem to be having a fine time having sex without divine legitimacy, since millions of people are having sex and babies without entering the doors of your church to get permissions, what exactly do you have against sex? Because it sounds to me like it's something you guys want to have control over. I mean, what if I worship Dionysus or Aphrodite, is it ok if they legitimize my sex? Does it have to be Yahweh?

F: I believe it does. [laughs] I don't believe in those Greek gods. I believe in the Hebrew god Yahweh.

S: So we're not so different. You believe in one out of the hundred thousand gods that humanity has invented in the past, and I believe in exactly none of them. We agree 99,999 out of 100,000.

F: I guess we're not that different, if you look at it that way, but I believe in the one god.

S: But your god was not the one god for all of its history. Yahweh became the one god in the West over a period of centuries. Even characters like Moses and Solomon never believed that Yahweh was the only god. So why should I go to any god to legitimize what is so natural to humans and animals and the birds and the bees?

F: Well, you don't have to, but I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.

S: Alright, let me ask, does a condom kill souls?

F: Well, some theologians claimed that, but no, I can't say it kills souls because it prevents the sperm and the egg from ever uniting.

S: The church does say you can use the rhythm method if you want to have sex but don't really want a child, right? Isn't that contradictory, since it's a method to avoid having children but have sex?

F: No, the church is saying sex is for having children. If you don't want to have children, but want to have sex, use the rhythm method. But God's will prevails, and if you are to have a child, so be it.

S: That sounds rather simplistic. At a time when we have wars over resources, doesn't it behoove church leaders to change their attitude toward sex and their stand on the use of condoms? Considering that overpopulation directly leads to want, disease, and war, how can you say that having babies is commanded by God without exception?

F: Why should our ideals change just because circumstances are changing? God is changeless, and so his laws are changeless.

S: You know, your response hits on the basic problem with all of Christian morality. It determines right and wrong without any regard for the either social or personal consequences of one's actions. How on earth can you formulate an ethical system when you don't have the least bit concern for the consequences of your ethical declarations? If the consequences are heinous and violent, how can you call your actions ethical?

F: Because we are not result-oriented people. We aren't after particular results. Our ethics is based on the word of God. If the word of God leads to war and want, so be it. That is better than not following the word of God and having peace and plenty.

S: Really? Do you believe in eternal heaven and eternal hell?

F: Yes, I do.

S: Do you think that the way you live and your faith will insure passage to eternal heaven?

F: Yes, that is the promise Jesus made to us.

S: Isn't that a result? And isn't wanting heaven a selfish motive?

F: It's a result, but not a worldly one, and yes it's selfish, but it's selfish for God's will.

S: How though, can you ever get to heaven by making a hell of this world in the process?

F: By showing that we don't care about this world or the finite results to our person or others.

S: Well, I can't fault you for your honesty, but I can for your logic. How can finite actions and beliefs amount to an eternal consequence? Your very Bible says you sow according to what you reap. You don't reap an infinite amount multiplied by what you sow. How can there be any sense that your god is just when the hellish punishment, or the heavenly reward, is infinitely more than the merits of one lifetime?

F: It may not seem just, but everyone has the chance to believe in Jesus.

S: Do you really believe that? Do you honestly think that a child born to Muslim or Hindu parents has the exact same chance of believing in Jesus that a child born to Christian parents has? You know, there's a saying, religion is a matter of geography, and it's a saying that's repeated for a very good reason. It's true for the most part.

F: Actually, I believe that people who are good and do not sin, even if they don't consciously believe in Jesus, will still go to heaven because they lived according to his ideals, though they didn't know it.

S: That's condescending. It's like a Hindu saying all you Catholics are actually living according to the will of Krishna, you just don't know it.

F: I don't claim to have a reasonable defense of my beliefs, and I don't need to. They are a matter of faith.

12 Minutes Guest/Skit/Callers/E-mails

You are listening to The Nexus, the most controversial show on radio. I'm Sankara Saranam, the author of the multi-award winning God Without Religion. godwithoutreligion.com

S: How about faith in reason and commonsense? How about faith in the questioning process, in the scientific method toward seeking knowledge? I don't recall a priest ever inventing anything of any use to the human race by keeping his nose in the Bible.

F: We didn't invent the nuclear bomb either.

S: No, just the Inquisition. Actually, it was people in seats of centralized power, politicians, just like church leaders in seats of centralized power, who wanted the bomb, built and used. But you seem to miss the point since it was the scientific method that arrived at the knowledge that, when applied, produced nuclear power and weapons, it means it works. Peering into the Bible gave no knowledge. It only gave a crutch to theologians who either arrived at nonsensical models of existence to fit the Bible's utterances or had to twist the meaning of the words to arrive at something half-way rational. How can you be right about invisible spirit when you've been so wrong about the visible world?

F: Religion and science can work hand in hand. Religion teaches the way things are to be used, and science figures out how things work.

S: It was science that invented the torture devices the church used during the Inquisition. There's the Crusades, the Conquistadores, the holocaust, the bloodthirsty Jesuit campaigns. Need I go on? Are you really so good at teaching how to use these things?

F: The ideals of Jesus are hard to live by, but that does not mean that we shouldn't strive to live by them. The church has made mistakes, but it is still the representative of God on earth.

S: That's a matter of belief – blind belief – since there's no historical evidence to link Jesus, who has no historicity, to the Church.

F: I know that, the Sermon on the Mount is there for all to read.

S: It was there before Jesus ever spoke it in the Bible. It doesn't belong to him, whether he was a fiction or not.

F: No, but he lived by it perfectly.

S: Well, cursing a fig tree because it didn't bear fruit is pretty lame.

F: I don't understand that passage either. It's one of the mysteries.

S: Well, on this topic, what do you mean by calling the Bible the word of God? The Bible contains the words of men living in the Dark Ages, with their cultural baggage and backwards beliefs, at a time when there was no science, and also at a time where infant mortality was high. So, how can you take their words as infallible when they didn't know what our world would be like, and they didn't get all their own facts straight? Seems to me if you're looking for the word of God, or God's will, I would rather look precisely at the effects of our actions – look at the laws of nature. If something leads to violence or suppression or misogyny, then it's probably not the right thing to do.

F: There is a reason why God decided to have his will known through those minds at that time. You can call them misogynistic, patriarchal, belligerent, narrow-minded, but you can't stop there. You have to admit that God is misogynistic, patriarchal, warlike and narrow-minded. God hates homosexuality, and also hates those who oppose his will, including homosexuals that will not change their ways. You can't blame the Bible writers. God could have had his will known now through the writings of Tennessee Williams, but he didn't. The church has been misogynistic for centuries. Disempowering women is part of the word of God, to some degree. That can't be denied. The church is not going just change course in midstream and suddenly give women power when the word of God puts them in an inferior position to men.

S: Hold on, why can't we decide that God speaks through someone or something else? Why can't his word be in *God Without Religion*, for example? If it makes more sense and is reasonable? Why believe an infinite being would choose the words of some Dark Age half-wits

and plagiarists who throw words into Jesus's mouth that he could have never said, and fill their paragraphs with contradictions?

F: Because that's what I believe.

S: We all have to believe that because that is what you believe?

F: No, no. We all have to believe it for the same reasons I have to.

S: Which are?

F: It's in the Bible.

S: And?

F: That's it. What more reason do you need?

S: You're kidding? It's in a book, and no matter how wrong it is about so many things, no matter how wrong the church has been in the past in the ways it interpreted it, I have to ignore my common sense and believe it contains the words of the only god that ever existed?

F: Again, it is not reasonable. You can't believe you're the only person that's figured that out. It's a matter of faith.

S: Define faith.

F: Well, the Bible says that faith is the proof of things unseen.

S: Why should I believe in the invisible proof of the Bible's authority when the visible evidence is so overwhelmingly against it? I mean, I can say to you that you have to have faith that God Without Religion is the word of God, and you could never prove it isn't.

F: No, I couldn't, but if you believed that your book was the word of God, and said you had that invisible proof, then I would say it was the devil that gave you that proof.

S: Well, at least the devil wouldn't be asking me to adopt a faith that confounds my reason. And, the devil wouldn't be asking me to

believe things that divide the human race. I mean, if we are both going to believe in the improvable, then why don't we believe in something that unites the human race instead of divides it?

F: I can't help that. That's what I believe. My God is divisive. What can I tell you?

S: So all of this opinion, as much suffering as it causes in this world, is finally based on something you choose to believe for no apparent good reason and in spite of so many bad reasons. It's been believed for so long – I assume your parents believed in it too – so no point in questioning the belief?

F: Well, I've been down that road, and it just leads to confusion and doubt and uncertainty.

S: Maybe, but it also leads to knowledge, and wisdom, and courage, and fortitude, and self-reliance, and self-determination, and all the wonderful qualities that centralized authorities inhibit. But let's get back to sex and condom use. I guess you believe that homosexual couples can't have sex at all, right? I mean, they can't have children, so, all their sex is a form of gluttony or lust. Is that how you feel?

F: Exactly.

S: But they have another purpose to their sex. Are they wrong?

F: Yes. S: So, you've never had sexual desire?

F: Of course I have.

S: And those priests that had sex with young boys – that was obviously a case of lust, and was against church teachings.

F: Of course it was.

S: So the church does recognize that people have sexual desire, irrespective of whether they want a child or not?

F: Of course, it doesn't deny that.

12 Minutes Guest/Skit/Callers/E-mails

You are listening to The Nexus, the most controversial show on radio. I'm Sankara Saranam, the author of the multi-award winning God Without Religion. godwithoutreligion.com

S: If you can't deny it, why don't you address it? If you're telling your vulnerable followers that they can't have sex unless they want children, but then you're not addressing the basic issue. Address the challenge of sexual desire independent of procreation, and maybe you won't have priests having sex with little boys.

F: How do you know those priests were motivated by sexual desire? Why assume that? It's like saying a glutton is motivated by hunger. Gluttons eat long after they aren't hungry anymore.

S: Yes, but it is you who are improperly assuming to equate the sex they had with gluttony. How can it be gluttony when they are celibates? The rape of boys wasn't gluttony, it was just some satisfaction. They were just expressing their good old fashion sexual desire, though in the wrong direction. It was the desire we are all born with to insure the procreation of the species, which was thwarted by church rules. They're getting just a little action, the wrong little action.

F: Either way, the church has addressed the issue. For one, we are working to remove homosexual priests.

S: Heterosexuals will have sex with men, and boys, when their access to women is gone. Why are you blaming homosexuality, another one of your sins, instead of your own biblically informed attitude toward sex?

F: I don't think straight men who become priests will have sex with young boys.

S: If they don't have anything else to do with their sexual desire, they will. In fact, since the Bible says be fruitful and multiply what's with celibate priests in the first place? You're commanded to get married and have babies, you just said. So maybe these lawsuits against your church are just god's retribution for breaking his command.

F: On the surface, it may seem like a contradiction, but we are following in the footsteps of our Lord, who was never married or even touched by the sex act in birth.

S: So why did the New Testament have to misquote the Hebrew Bible in its attempt to prove that Jesus's virgin birth was predicted? Why the mention of the lineage from King David down to Joseph when Joseph was not even Jesus's father?

F: Again, it's just one of those mysteries of scripture.

S: That's a cop out, like saying this makes no sense, I'd like people to overlook that, so I'll call it an unfathomable mystery of God.

F: It only sounds like that to people who lack faith.

S: Well, back to the issue. Why don't you address the issue of sexual desire in your followers and priests?

F: We do. We teach people to pray and serve to overcome desires.

S: Then it looks like those criminal priests were not so devoted to your Lord.

F: No one is perfect.

S: Well, it's a far cry from perfect to pederasty. Are they going to heaven?

F: Yes, if they confess their sins and change their ways.

S: And the children who were abused and say were turned off to religion and the church. How about them?

F: I would have to say they failed the test of faith.

S: So let me get this straight. Boy is sent to church by parents. Boy gets screwed by priest. Priest confesses, goes to heaven when he

dies. Boy becomes bitter, loses this so-called faith of yours, and ends up in eternal hell. Wow, you worship one hell of a nice god.

F: No one ever said god was nice. He is to be feared, and loved.

S: We'll let our listeners decide. Another question: If my wife and I are believers, she is pregnant, and we both want to have sex, we don't use a condom, we want to have a baby, is having sex a problem?

F: Well, yes, it would have to be a sin. You're already having a baby, and you can't have another baby, so having sex is lustful then.

S: So, divinely legitimate sex is unprotected sex that happens after you're married in a church and the woman is having regular periods.

F: Right. S: Wow. That's some major restrictions. Do believers follow all that?

F: Our ideals are high, and they are hard to reach, but those who err can come and confess and be forgiven.

S: You know, I don't mind challenges and I love the disciplined life, but anyone can invent restrictions that are next to impossible to live by, but that have no reason or science or logic behind them. All you have behind yours is something you call faith and a book written in the Dark Ages, interpreted by erring humans who don't even have the capacity to question the book's authority.

F: We have these rules because they're God's will, and it so happens that these rules give us more control over our followers. When you control someone sexually, you control them entirely. It's not just coincidence that God's will also gives his church control over people.

S: For once we agree. No, I don't think it is coincidence. But I think it is rather convenient to say that any god has anything to do with it. I think human beings figured out how to control people, and then sanctified their ambitions of power by calling it god's will.

F: Well, let me ask you something. Do you have a daughter?

S: No, just one son.

F: Well, if you did, would you want your daughter to have sex before marriage, maybe even sex as a teenager?

S: To me, sexual desire is a natural part of the body. If her body is creating the desire, then it must not have a problem with her having sex. When she wants sex, I wouldn't stand in the way of her finding a partner. Instead, I'd make sure she received sound sexual education, understood the uses and drawbacks of the various kinds of contraception, and basically armed her with knowledge so she could have sex responsibly and without fear.

F: Well, we are different people. I'd want to kill the boy that had sex with my daughter before she was married.

S: That does not surprise me. Were you sexually thwarted as a child? Studies have shown that societies where sex is suppressed in teens are thousands of times more likely to develop violent and misogynistic adults. How do you know it isn't Satan behind these doctrines you profess? Do you believe in Satan?

F: Yes, Satan exists. But his works would be known by their fruit.

S: Finally!!! That's my point! The fruit are the consequences of what we do! The consequences of your beliefs are horrendous, and they've been that way for millennia. I can see pederasty taking place in a church instituted by Satan, not in one instituted by a loving god.

F: Satan was in the minds of those priests, not in the church.

S: Right, but it happened in the church, it was covered up by the church to some degree, and it was a result of the church's sexual restrictions. Isn't that strike three, father?

F: Your mind can mislead you. S: But not your mind?

F: No, I don't use my mind. I use my faith. S: Well, I think you've just said it all.

Closing

Thank Father Peter Ingwe

Thank Listeners

www.godwithoutreligion.com

Write questions and comments, or let us know if you are interested in sponsoring The Nexus.

You can also find my retreat schedule. I'll be leading a course at the Omega Institute.