Thanks for all your unhesitating support following last week's disclosure of my existential angst. I really appreciate it and I feel much better now.

_time magazine_ has published its top 10 religious stories of 2010 as part of its top 10 of everything in 2010. The No 1 spot is occupied by the brouhaha over Park51 – the **Ground Zero mosque**. While I am obviously delighted that Muslims have triumphed over the planet's single biggest religious constituency (Catholics), I am upset that the Vatican is dominating the list. Come on Muslims – try harder! Other noteworthy stories include Barack Obama's failure to go to the Golden Temple because he was worried [or not] about appearing Muslim. Time reports: "In the US, Sikhs are very often mistaken for Muslims – and, when Islamophobia enters, unhappy consequences ensue. That was probably one factor too many for an American politician already burdened with false but unstanchable [sic] scuttlebutt that he is a secret Muslim."
Next week, activist and journalist Robert Berman arrives in the UK to talk about the compatibility between halacha and organ donation. Berman wants more Jews to carry donor cards and donate their organs to people, whether they are Jewish or not. Earlier this year he expressed his frustration at the lack of new guidelines from the London Beth Din on the issue of brain death, which divides rabbis. Rabbis who object to organ donation do so on the grounds that a person is brain-stem dead but their heart is still beating with the help of a ventilator. "Such rabbis consider a beating heart to be a sign of life and therefore donating organs at this point would be killing the donor. The question is whether or not a brain-stem dead person is alive or dead." He'll be speaking at Limmud.

Slightly disappointed that Paddy Power – which will open a book on pretty much anything – hasn't taken bets on who will be the next chief rabbi. Lord Sacks is stepping down in 2013 but the hunt for his successor has already started. How will he be remembered? As a rock or a relic?

Welcome to the Sikh Council UK, which launched last weekend following a six-month consultation process across the country. The group claims it is the first time that most temples and groups in the UK have thrown their weight behind such an initiative and "come together on a united platform" on key issues and areas of concern. We wish them well.

And finally, sex toys for sex tips? The Christian sex website Whollylove.co.uk has launched a festive appeal, offering couples sex toys in return for tips on how to stay happily married during the Christmas and New Year period. Its "Have Yourself a Merry Married Christmas" campaign recognises that while Christmas can be "a wonderful time of year", for many couples "it is a time of great stress and the potential for relationship breakdown is significant". The deal is that you email them your ideas and you get a toy for your trouble. Co-founder Stella Haggerty says: "We realise that we probably will attract some criticism [sic] for linking Christmas with sexual intimacy – despite it being clearly within marriage – and for offering multi-lighted vibrators as part of our campaign – but we really do believe strongly in the importance of doing everything possible to support marriage at what is a stressful time of year, and the colourful vibrators seemed like effective tool to do this with!

Ads by Google
A Jewish Christmas?
The Jewish prophet Isaiah predicted the reason for this season.
www.isaiah53.com
Many Jews believe in God
But not all. Humanistic Jews affirm Jewish heritage and culture.
www.CityCongregation.org
Christians For Israel
Learn About Issues Facing Israel & Christian-Jewish Relations.
www.HolyLandMoments.org

Comments in chronological order (Total 77 comments)

Sipech
16 December 2010 1:05PM
We realise that we probably will attract some criticism for linking Christmas with sexual intimacy
Given that a lot of people (myself included) have their birthday's in late September/early October, this isn't exactly a stretch of the imagination!
Recommend (12)
Report abuse

billysbar
16 December 2010 1:09PM
and for offering multi-lighted vibrators as part of our campaign – And they can double as a xmas tree decoration....the perfect xmas gift!
Recommend (12)
Report abuse

Henizy
16 December 2010 1:14PM
the colourful vibrators seemed like effective tool indeed
Recommend (2)
Report abuse
Valten78
16 December 2010 1:20PM
Are the Sikh Council in receipt of any public funds? I can't find anything on their site indicating if they are or not.
I'm happy for them to form their own council if that’s what they wish but the state should not be involved.
Recommend (24)
Report abuse

ToffeeDan1
16 December 2010 1:20PM
Jewish organ donation - what a snip!!
Recommend (17)
Report abuse

nufubar
16 December 2010 1:23PM
*The Christian sex website*
The mind boggles...
Recommend (6)
Report abuse

Sipec
16 December 2010 1:23PM
I apologise for my appalling grammar above. Have only just noticed.
Recommend (0)
Report abuse
VoxAC30
16 December 2010 1:24PM
This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.

DamnWymz
16 December 2010 1:25PM
Didn't The Exorcist get in a lot of trouble for its Christian themed dildo scene?
Recommend (1)
Report abuse

waitingmunchkin
16 December 2010 1:27PM
Was it meant to say 'critischism' I wonder?

But wouldn't a vibrator count as a third party? There's no way of putting this delicately so I won't try, but they are advocating, are they not, the penetration of one's good lady wife with a penis that is not one's own. ADULTERER!!! time to start collecting rocks.
Recommend (10)
Report abuse

MiskatonicUniversity
16 December 2010 1:31PM
Personally I thought it was interesting that the Park51 project was originally called the Cordoba House.
The promoters had the good sense to change the name when it was pointed out that celebrating the capital of a dead colonial empire that reduced the natives to second-class citizens in their own land and organised major persecutions probably wasn't the way to win friends and influence people.
It would be like an organisation aiming at British Chinese friendship calling itself the
Raj Foundation...
Still, better late than never!

Recommend (19)

Valten78
16 December 2010 1:20PM
Are the Sikh Council in receipt of any public funds? I can't find anything on their site indicating if they are or not.

I'm happy for them to form their own council if that's what they wish but the state should not be involved.

According to Admin at the site:

Initially the SCUK will be reliant upon the affiliation fees. We hope that in time it will tap into grant aid opportunities and undertake fundraising activities.

num5
16 December 2010 1:43PM

Just because of 9/11 which happened what, nine years ago, people got offended by a mosque? What next? No Aussie embassy in the US because of Wikileaks? Protests against the New York Islamic center are just another case of PC gone mad culture.

MiskatonicUniversity
16 December 2010 1:50PM

"Just because of 9/11 which happened what, nine years ago, people got offended by a
mosque? What next? No Aussie embassy in the US because of Wikileaks? Protests against the New York Islamic center are just another case of PC gone mad culture."

Indeed. And the Islamic scholars can't even now remember the event that led to Christian churches and Jewish synagogues being banned in Arabia.

As you say PC gone totally lunatic, and for the longest time.

By the sound of it, the re-branded Park51 organisers now understand that the episodes of Islamic empires were unpleasant for the rest of us and are keen to distance themselves from that historical inheritance. Let's hope the scholars of Islam, as represented by the ulema of Arabia and Egypt get there too and allow people to follow religion (or not) freely.

Recommend (26)

Report abuse

Damntheral

16 December 2010 1:56PM

Protests against the New York Islamic center are just another case of PC gone mad culture.

Nonsense. If anything it's the opposite of PC.

Recommend (22)

Report abuse

bailliegillies

16 December 2010 1:59PM

The Christian sex website

Sex toys for christians? Don't they realise that they're not supposed to enjoy sex? I didn't think they were supposed to know about things like this unless it's approved by the big papa in Rome

Recommend (6)

Report abuse

BarabbasFreed
16 December 2010 2:04PM

**Balliegillies**
I didn't think they were supposed to know about things like this unless it's approved by the big papa in Rome
Think back 500 years. Think Henry VIII, think Luther, Zwingli, John Knox and Tyndale. You seem to have a wee gap in your historical knowledge there. Nothing major, admittedly, and I'm sure you'll just fine without covering it, its just kind of embarrassing to see ignorance on display.
Recommend (14)

16 December 2010 2:05PM

"Sex toys for christians? Don't they realise that they're not supposed to enjoy sex? I didn't think they were supposed to know about things like this unless it's approved by the big papa in Rome"
Nah, within marriage it is A-OK.
Fringe movements that decide celibacy is even better, like the Shakers, tend to have a short lifespan.
Apparently their last big recruitment drive was during the 1929 depression - still, nice kitchens. Not many religions can offer that kind of legacy.
Recommend (9)

16 December 2010 2:06PM

He you go voxAC30 knock yourself out the choice of religious sex toys is excellent
http://www.blowfish.com/catalog/toys/symbolic_dildos.html
Recommend (3)
doughnut
16 December 2010 2:20PM
we really do believe strongly in the importance of doing everything possible to support marriage at what is a stressful time of year, and the colourful vibrators seemed like effective tool to do this with!
the religious "believe strongly" in the weirdest ideas, of which the above is by no means the best example
Recommend (4)
Report abuse

urnotanatheist
16 December 2010 2:32PM
The only Christian sex tip I know is "try the other hole dear"
Recommend (13)
Report abuse

Bikhair
16 December 2010 2:43PM
Miskatonic,
"By the sound of it, the re-branded Park51 organisers now understand that the episodes of Islamic empires were unpleasant for the rest of us..."
How old are you?
Recommend (6)
Report abuse

urnotanatheist
16 December 2010 2:46PM
Jewish organ donation? I once knew a disillusioned Sally Army tambourinist who gave her instrument to OXFAM
"The promoters had the good sense to change the name when it was pointed out that celebrating the capital of a dead colonial empire that reduced the natives to second-class citizens in their own land and organised major persecutions probably wasn't the way to win friends and influence people."

What colonial empire of the past didn't do this? I doubt persecution was the defining and most notable feature of Cordoba Spain.

and the colourful vibrators seemed like effective tool to do this with!

Seems like self gnosticism is worth exclaiming.

Sex toys for christians? Don't they realise that they're not supposed to enjoy sex? I didn't think they were supposed to know about things like this unless it's approved by the big papa in Rome

Given recent CiF belief articles on contraception and Catholicism this raises some interesting questions. A form of sexual activity that cannot possibly lead to conception, one wonders whether it would be approved.
While I am obviously delighted that Muslims have triumphed over the planet's single biggest religious constituency (Catholics), I am upset that the Vatican is dominating the list. Come on Muslims – try harder!

Not that Riazat Butt would ever be so even handed as to point out that Muslims have a complete lock on any list of 'Top 10 most lethal terrorist attacks in 2010'. But then those they kill are also adherents of the same 'religion of peace' that we keep getting told Islam supposedly is ... Go figure!

If you're a catholic and you share dildos with other catholics, are you allowed to use condoms on them to protect yourself from STIs? C'mon - it's a serious question. I would have thought that the only reason condom use is banned is because it prevents conception. But are condoms also banned for 60 year-old couples? or gay men (even if they aren't prostitutes)? Just trying to follow the logic.

For those who can't be bothered following the link to Time:

1 Park51: The "Ground Zero Mosque"
2 The Vatican and the Child Abuse Scandal
3 The Bankruptcy of the Crystal Cathedral
4 Franklin Graham vs. the Muslims
5 The Rev. Terry Jones Threatens to Burn Korans
6 Women Priests, In Spite of the Vatican
7 The Pope Doesn't Quite Endorse Condoms
8 Christians Under Attack in the Middle East
9 Obama Decides Not to Visit the Golden Temple
10 The Vatican and Homer Simpson

Read more: http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/completelist/o,29569,2035319,00.html#ixzz18HwfTziT

I make it 5 1/2 to Catholics (2, 4, 6, 7, 10, and partly 8), 5 to Muslims (1, 3, 5, 8, 9) and 5 for Protestants, 3, 4, 5, 6 [assuming Anglicans are now wholly protestant], partly 8, and partly 10). I've calculated this via some form of proportional representation, so the total doesn't add up to ten.

For those incorrigably ignorant, Franklin Graham is Billy's son, and has corresponding ideas about the Religion of Peace. The Crystal Cathedral is one of those tele-evangelist temples to Mammon that has finally been consumed by its own god. Ah, and Homer Simpson: the Osservatore Romano stuck its tongue in its cheek and said the Simpson family might just be sort-of Catholic; Time reclaimed them for the protestant flock.

Recommend (2)

@peitha Well, it's a foregone conclusion that Muslims would dominate any list of terrorist attacks. I was looking at Time's efforts, which is much more inclusive
@billysbar @Henizy very good

Recommend (4)

The Sikhs have organised? colour me surprised. The only Sikh joke I know (related by a
Sikh colleague) goes:
A man opens his door to someone doing a survey who asks: 'are you a member of an
organised religion?'
He replies: 'No, I'm a Sikh'

Possibly you have to be a Sikh or know one well to get that one.
Recommend (10)

peitha
10 most lethal terrorist attacks in 2010.
Sounds like a bad show on Bravo. When Muslims Attack!
Recommend (5)

Not that Riazat Butt would ever be so even handed as to point out that Muslims have a
complete lock on any list of 'Top 10 most lethal terrorist attacks in 2010'.
Incidentally I've just looked over that link and have noted with interest that the UK
appears nine times. Yet every single one of the incidents in question refers to Northern
Ireland, not a single mention of any Islamic fundamentalism going on in the UK. All that
talk the other day on CIF of the UK being a 'hotbed' of Islamic fundamentalism is
beginning to look like allot of hot air.
Incidentally why are there so few reports of what’s going on in Ireland in the UK press?
All the evidence shows that the Irish militants are more likely to commit acts of violence
on UK soil than Muslims and yet all the press coverage would suggest otherwise.
Recommend (10)
Time magazine has published its top 10 religious stories of 2010. Come on Muslims – try harder!

The years not over yet. Plenty of time left for an Xmas terror attack, one fella tried it in Sweden already. You never know, you might just get your wish.

Jewish organ donation - what a snip!!

Good point. They somehow don't seem to recognise the skin being the largest organ of the human body.

I don't understand why a Christian sex shop is even a story. I mean it's no more weird than Islamic banking or a sex shop that emphasises women's role in sex. It would be far more weird if the sex shop was a Christian themed sex shop rather than the reality of a shop that encourages sex between married adults.

Anyway it's only Catholics that are not supposed to enjoy sex, which anyone who knows Catholic girls will know that it makes them enjoy it all the more.
Sipech
16 December 2010 5:35PM

riazatbutt
it's a foregone conclusion that Muslims would dominate any list of terrorist attacks
You never know. Those Hare-Krishnas can be pretty terrorising with those little drums and tambourines.
Recommend (5)
Report abuse

urnotanatheist
16 December 2010 5:36PM

"Anyway it's only Catholics that are not supposed to enjoy sex, which anyone who knows Catholic girls will know that it makes them enjoy it all the more."
Until they get married at any rate.
Recommend (5)
Report abuse

riazatbutt
16 December 2010 5:44PM

You're cheering me up no end, esp. after my spectacular failure to win anything in the Guardian Christmas raffle.
Recommend (4)
Report abuse

toba
16 December 2010 6:18PM

These stories, taken as a whole, do a good job of showing the absolute absurdity of
religious belief, and I suspect Riazat, that was your intention....long may this tradition of giving an annual roundup of the fantastical delusions of the Great Unthinking Masses continue until it no longer needs to.

**epeeist:**

Given recent CiF belief articles on contraception and Catholicism this raises some interesting questions. A form of sexual activity that cannot possibly lead to conception, one wonders whether it would be approved.

They don’t approve of anything that isn’t open to conception.

For a good general history on the subject, I recommend Ute Ranke-Heinemann's *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*. In earlier centuries, using contraception could earn greater penances than killing someone, and was regarded as worse than murder...

Next week, activist and journalist Robert Berman arrives in the UK to talk about the compatibility between halacha and organ donation.

I know there have been disputes over the use of valves of porcine origin in heart surgery.
georgesdelatour

16 December 2010 7:40PM

bikhair

You might find this interesting:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunilo_and_Alodia

Recommend (0)

Report abuse

| Link |

rongoklunk

16 December 2010 8:02PM

riazatbutt;

Big news from Canada. The Globe&Mail reports that churches are closing all across Canada because young people no longer buy into religion. There are currently 4 or 5 blogs in the G&M today on religion, and most commenters are against religion. But against this we have religion being imported from the Philippines, India and the Middle East which bodes ill for Canada. One day Islam could be Canada's biggest religion. Then what happens? Or will the immigrant children also drop their religion as they grow up in a country which is quite secular, as Canadian children have? Riazat; Don't ignore what's happening in Canada. Lots of religious friction worth reporting.

Recommend (5)

Report abuse

| Clip |

| Link |

Bikhair

16 December 2010 8:23PM

georgesdelatour,

Forget finding it interesting. I cant even find it relevant.

Recommend (1)

Report abuse

| Clip |

| Link |
In the US, Sikhs are very often mistaken for Muslims...

The difference is easy to understand. Sikhs carry 7-inch knives called kirpans, and Muslims wear exploding underwear.

RogerINtheUSA
16 December 2010 11:58PM
num5
16 December 2010 1:43PM
Just because of 9/11 which happened what, nine years ago, people got offended by a mosque? What next? No Aussie embassy in the US because of Wikileaks? Protests against the New York Islamic center are just another case of PC gone mad culture. A better analogy would be the Germans in 1949 building a German Ideology Centre 2 blocks from Coventry Cathedral

google Triumphalism

RogerINtheUSA
17 December 2010 12:02AM
The Christian sex website Whollylove.co.uk has launched a festive appeal,

Cleanliness is next to Godliness

http://shop.whollylove.co.uk/product_info.php?products_id=5040&osCsid=leqbjjk2ffm3eilpdacv5h20i0

Antibacterial Toy Cleaner 118ml
Those vibrators will be handy at the second coming.

Hmm, depends on the couple. I won`t be able to see my mistress for about three weeks over the festive season but that will only make my desire grow.

Oh, sorry, that not the religious message you were wanting?