

What is false religion? Are you distressed about crimes committed in the name of religion? Do the warfare, terrorism, and corruption perpetrated by those who claim to serve God offend your sense of justice? Why does religion seem to be at the root of so many problems?

The fault lies, not with all religion, but with *false* religion. A widely respected religious figure, Jesus Christ, indicated that false religion produces bad works, just as a “rotten tree produces worthless fruit.” (Matthew 7:15-17) What fruit does false religion yield?

False Religion . . .

■ **MEDDLES IN WAR AND POLITICS:** “Across Asia and beyond,” says the journal *Asiaweek*, “power-hungry leaders are cynically manipulating the people’s religious sentiments for their own needs.” As a result, the journal warns: “The world threatens to sink into madness.” A prominent religious leader in the United States declared: “You’ve got to kill the terrorists before the killing stops.” His solution? “Blow them all away in the name of the Lord.” By contrast, the Bible says: “If anyone makes the statement: ‘I love God,’ and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar.” (1 John 4:20) Jesus even said: “*Continue to love your enemies.*” (Matthew 5:44) How many religions can you think of whose members engage in war?

■ **SPREADS FALSE DOCTRINE:** Most religions teach that the soul or spirit is some invisible part of a human that survives the death of the physical body. By means of this teaching, many of these religions exploit their members, charging money to pray for departed souls. However, the Bible teaches a different doctrine. “*The soul that is sinning—it itself will die.*” (Ezekiel 18:4) “The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Jesus taught that the dead will be resurrected—an unnecessary action if humans had an immortal soul. (John 11:11-25) Does your religion teach that the soul does not die?

■ **TOLERATES IMMORAL SEX:** In Western lands, church groups ordain gay and lesbian members of the clergy and urge governments to recognize same-sex marriages. Even churches that condemn immorality have tolerated religious leaders who have sexually abused children. What, though, does the Bible teach? It plainly states: “*Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God’s kingdom.*” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Do you know of religions that condone immoral sex?

