

# THE NEW BLASPHEMIES

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identity politics and climate-change activism. These are not merely religions, however; they are the religions of fanatics.

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“But we don’t have blasphemy laws,” I hear people say when someone protests about some perceived slur on their God or Prophet. Indeed, we do not. Essentially moribund, they were [abolished in England in 2008](#) and in Scotland in 2021. If we did, our prisons would be overflowing with the people who blaspheme against Christianity. Appropriately, British blasphemy laws only ever protected Christianity and, even then, only the Christianity of the established churches. However, the lack of such laws did not protect the right of the public to watch [a film of which some Muslims disapproved](#) or [a teacher from having to go into hiding](#) with his family for showing a cartoon they did not like. In France, the consequences for upsetting the Islamist mob can be more serious, and even fatal. Islamic extremists require no laws to discourage blasphemy; they simply take the law into their own bloody hands.

But blasphemy not only irritates people of a religious persuasion, other blasphemies have emerged which affect the country as a whole. The consequences may not be so violent as they have been in France, but they are unpleasant, nevertheless. You will not be killed, but you may lose your job and be unable to make a living, or feed your family. You may not be stoned and left to die under a pile of rubble, but you will be ‘piled on’ via social media. You will be cast into the metaphorical wilderness as you lose friends, family, and social position. In other words, you will become a victim of [‘cancel culture.’](#)

For there to be blasphemy there needs to be religion and, in this case, I am referring to the religions of identity politics and climate-change activism. More recently, COVID

orthodoxy was a manifestation of the same phenomenon. In fact, while these may seem to represent disparate interests, there is [remarkable cross-fertilisation](#) between them, including [a call for collective action](#). These are not merely religions, however; they are the religions of fanatics. Their adherents have an overriding set of beliefs to which their lives conform, and to which they wish others to convert. They have their own language, usually to differentiate who is 'in' from who is 'out,' and they are associated with a high degree of self-righteousness. Thus, those who ascribe to identity politics are '[woke](#)' and those who eschew them are not. Those who subscribe to the theory that human activity is the sole cause of climate change, and that we are heading for a [climate emergency](#), identify themselves as 'green' and the more extreme elements belong to direct action groups such as [Insulate Britain](#) and [Extinction Rebellion](#). Holding their particular sets of beliefs, while demonising those who do not as '[climate change deniers](#),' is sufficient justification for actions [which inconvenience and even endanger the lives](#) of ordinary working people. If you questioned the COVID orthodoxy and refused to wear a face mask you were accused, [contrary to all evidence](#), of being a danger to other people.

They have their high priests, saints, and gurus. Thus, identity politics has organisations like [Black Lives Matter](#) and [Pride](#), and martyrs like [George Floyd](#). The climate-change activists have their living saint, [Greta Thunberg](#), who is revered and whose petulant utterances become mantras of the movement. Many transitory gurus such as [Bill Gates](#) and [Anthony Fauci](#) arose during the COVID panic. Despite George Floyd's criminal record, he is not to be besmirched; despite the [corruption among the leaders of Black Lives Matter](#), the organisation is not to be criticised; and despite Greta Thunberg's lack of education and manners, she is beyond reproach in the eyes of climate activists who, one imagines, would follow her over a cliff if they thought it would further their aims. If Bill Gates or Anthony Fauci say we need a vaccine and a booster, and then another booster, the COVID fanatics collectively and repeatedly roll up their sleeves.

These symptoms of our post-Christian world are substitute religions and exemplify the maxim, [ascribed to Alexander Hamilton amongst others](#), that 'those who believe in nothing will fall for anything.' Lives emptied of true spirituality, or a belief in a higher power outside of themselves, often descend into the self-destructive nihilism of sex and drugs, or find something that offers religious-like features. In that vein, identity politics and climate-

change activism provide both purpose and companionship. They offer a creed by which to live, and a lens through which the world is viewed. They have their rituals and, crucially, promise a better world, if not in the next life, most definitely in this. Both climate-change and identity politics activists are essentially millennialist, pointing our way to a paradisaal future (while, in the former case, also predicting that the end is nigh), and to some extent the same is true of the COVID orthodoxy.

Where the analogy with religion breaks down, however, is that the major traditional religions are costly to their believers; they are characterised by changing oneself, sacrifice without reference to others, and eschewing the approval of man. On the whole, the major religions work by persuasion rather than expectation. The false religions of identity politics, climate-change activism, and COVID orthodoxy, while not without their own sacrifices, are characterised by requiring similar change in others. Thus, the adherents to identity politics demand respect and equality regardless of personal flaws and ability; the climate-change activists demand that we also sacrifice our way of life along with them; and the COVID-orthodox demand that we wear a face mask and get vaccinated.

Of course, as with the major traditional religions, the substitute religions have their schisms, and this is apparent in the Pride movement, encapsulating as it does the alphabet soup of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Queer, along with the curious, the undecided, and anyone for whom a name does not yet exist but who may be classified under the umbrella of 'Plus' (at the last count up to 150 sexual identities). Trouble appears to be brewing in the multicoloured house of LGBTQ+. Some, almost sensibly, want to drop the 'T,' as they adhere to the notion that, while you may adopt a different identity, you cannot change sex. Others still want 'people of colour' who are LGB (and maybe T and '+') to be acknowledged separately, leading to the production of ever more bizarre rainbow flags with black and brown inserts and circles. It is very hard for the onlooker to keep up. But they all have one thing in common which is that they will not be questioned or mocked, so that, when Brendan O' Neill recently called for 'a fightback against rainbow authoritarianism,' one wondered if blasphemy was really obsolete.