

Why religion is important to a society philosophy essay



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Our moral convictions precede us as we find ourselves lamenting a loss or potential loss of something important. How we define what is and is not important is solely dependent upon how choose to grant entities significances and phase out related societal detriments said entities may pose. We have widespread traditions to uphold, which is the consensus throughout all of civilization. Though, the reach and continuity of the upholding remains considerably controversial.

The religious-those who have willfully been indoctrinated, mostly-stand as major proponents of the aforementioned conundrum. They bring an matched sense of ambiguity to the table in regards to what we reserve strictly for a sentimental purpose over scientific purpose. A massive case in which this is highly evident is of the Kennewick Man. The Kennewick man dispute raised a bunch of issues regarding how religions have politics and science hogtied to a remarkably unavoidable pillar of contempt. It is a case in which the validity of scientific endeavor is challenged by the sacredness of religious conviction, and as a result of that turmoil, politics were compromised.

-The Back Story

What is important about the Kennewick Man situation is that among the most obvious problems regarding science and politics is the problem of ranking religious importance in a society. Surely, we can see that religion plays a big role in terms of freedom, but the reason for that is unclear. However, we can draw a number of conclusions in this regard which may rid some of the confusion involved.

The Kennewick Man issue stems from the findings of the skeleton of a buried body dubbed the “ Ancient One” on July 1996 “ below the surface of Lake Washington” by two men. The remains instantly sparked controversy. It so happened that the skeleton was regarded as religiously bound in some way, which made it largely a religious issue. There were “ claims made by Indian tribes, local officials, and some members of the scientific community” regarding ownership of the skeleton because of the controversy.

As a result of the attention, in March of 1998, “ the department of Interior and National Park Service agreed to assist the COE in resolving some of the issues related to the Federal case” (NPS, 2004) that was filed in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRA). The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers were the owners of the land in which the remains of the Kennewick Man were found, so they were responsible for the findings. Therefore, they were targeted by those pushing for the body’s protection using the NAGRA.

Naturally, there was a need for investigation, so scientists got involved and conducted research on the remains. For this operation, the Department of the Interior and National Park Service and the Corps of Engineers collaborated. Roughly eighteen highly referenced scholars and scientists conducted a “ variety of historical and scientific examinations, analyses, and studies.” (NPS, 2004) This took place between 1998 and 2004 as the legal proceedings picked up in depth.

According to the National Park Service (NPS), “ the Kennewick skeleton was physically examined, measured, and recorded using current and standard

scientific methods and techniques. Sediments adhering to the bones and trapped within the bone cavities were described and analyzed for similarity with the soil sediments in the vicinity of the discovery of the skeletal remains. The stone projectile point embedded in the skeleton's pelvis was described and analyzed." These findings were relevant to understanding the origins of the skeleton because they shed a near-full-on light of the reason the skeleton was there.

Accordingly, the bones were sampled in order to "confirm the ancient date for the remains," according to the report from the NPS. The report claimed that research had "yielded five major scientific reports" as a result of the separate experiments and tests performed by the researchers. These operations had been drastically exaggerated by the media during the time of the legal issues amid the controversy, with ignorance towards the actual reason for the scientific investigation. Essentially, the media missed the fact that the research had to be conducted because the origin of the man was up for dispute, which was a large piece of the legal issues following its discovery.

It turned out that the remains were 9,300 years old, according to the research, which still rolls on into the late 2012. According to anthropologist Douglas Owsley, the conclusion of the age of the remains "is important in the quest to understand where the now-famous Paleoamerican came from and who his descendants might be." In October of 2011, Owsley felt that it was extremely important to have a meeting with the Native American tribes of the area regarding the remains and the research regarding the remains because, according to him, "[the Columbia Basin, where the remains were
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found], it's their homeland territory, and they feel deep connections and roots. [He] felt it of vital important that [he] have a [face-to-face meeting and give them an overview as to what the scientific evidence was telling us." (Murphy, 2012)

-Possible Reasoning for Religious Conviction Using Evo-bio Evidence

Religious importance is no shallow issue in the case of the Kennewick man. A fact of relevance to that point is that humans have a considerable obligation to religion due to their biological makeup. The conviction towards the Kennewick man is, therefore, unsurprising since the discovery of the remains were inevitably controversial with the revelation of its Native American roots. We find that this obligation-the religious valuation-is innate to our neurological profiles. Particularly, we find that our brains have developed to process environments and problems within those environments with such an imagination that religion can come about at any moment.

In order to understand how religion plays a role in society, we first need to understand why humans find certain objects sacred. For this, we can look at the development of the neo cortex in the brain. The neo cortex is responsible for almost all of which we process logically. As we rationalize, the neo cortex is providing the instructions much of the rest of the brain uses to compute one or more generalities. In the case of the Kennewick man, Native Americans extend their hand of conviction towards the remains and they and the remains combined stand as a good reason to look first how religion came about in the biological evolution of human beings.

According to Robin Dunbar of the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford, religion is adaptive. According to her, “ nothing as costly as religion could possibly be maladaptation or a mere by-product.” She explored the significance of religion by evolutionary anthropologic findings in scientific research. She found that from we have discovered about the biological significance and origin of religion, there are four functions of religion: it 1) provides an explanation (provisional, however) for the complexities of the world; 2) causes psychological well-being, more or less; 3) triggers socialization; and finally, 4) it “ enforces conformity,” which is actually a key characteristic of religion that we see vividly throughout the case of the Kennewick man.

Since we have evolved to solve biological problems, part of our sophistication as organisms is structural, social belief systems. According to Dunbar, those who are actively religious usually “ live longer, are more content/happier, are less stressed, suffer fewer psychological problems, and recover faster from surgery.” Dunbar claimed (with evidence) that “ multi-level social systems are common in mammals” and that “ when sociality involves an implicit social contract, fitness accrues at the level of the individual, but through benefits generated by the ground.” In other words, the combined conformity of each socialite equates to more efficient human beings and heightened, beneficial human instinctiveness.

Dunbar, as other scientists have proposed, harped on the “ social brain hypothesis.” According to the hypothesis, religious thought is attributed to brain sizes in primates. It has been reasoned that the size of the neo cortex is inversely relational to the magnitude or involvement in and of religious

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thought. It is also logical to conclude that the size of social groups are greatly based on the size of the neocortex. According to Dunbar, "group size [and many aspects of "smart" behavior] are a function of neocortex volume." This is conspicuously evident in primate societies. This finding contributes to the fact that "all primate societies are based on an implicit social contract," which is essentially cooperation.

-Arguments Against Scientific Proceedings

-Arguments For Scientific Proceedings

Arguments against the ownership of the Kennewick man's remains by those other than the Native American tribes are significantly touch to come by. This is mainly because the Native Americans have almost no objective base for an argument against it. Accordingly, the Native Americans had absolutely no case against those who wanted to do research on the Kennewick man because the findings regarding the specific details of the remains are ambiguous. Therefore, the Native Americans cannot argue that the remains have tribal relevance. The courts concluded this and denied the Native Americans ownership rights over the remains. From there, the scientists were free to do as much research as they felt they needed to do without the consent of the litigating group of tribesmen (Doughton, 2006).

The core reason for the scientific proceedings is quite common. In essence, the research would yield a clearer look into our existence as organisms, even sufficing as clearing up confusions regarding terrain and even territories.

According to researchers, "the North American and South American

continents were once empty of people. Contrary to Indian religious beliefs
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that they have been here since the beginning of time, it is a fact that all humans, including the ancestors to modern Indians, came from Eurasia.” (Jantz, 2005)

The remains of the Kennewick man actually extends this fact tremendously by giving “ scientists and the public glimpses of the variety of people who were [in North America] prior to modern Indians.” (Jantz, 2005) The study of the Kennewick man helps us figure out how humans spread throughout this region. The studies also show how we have adapted to changing weather conditions (in the most drastic of the sense) and regional obscurities having to do with other animals, food shortages and excess, and other elements. These discoveries have clear applications to our modern world.

-How The Scientific Proceedings Are Important

-How the Social Proceedings Are Important

The question of what makes something important to a society is raised with the scientific proceedings and religion-related controversy. It is probably most wise to consider economic impact religion has in a society since religion has had a history of swaying governmental politics, particularly in judicial issues. However, by merely examining that our past scientific proceedings have constructed what we now know as survival mechanisms, we can rationally conclude that anything resulting from experimentation and deep analysis plays a role in the sustenance of human life. On the other hand, the metaphysical speculation involved in religion gives way to scientific dealings, which is why issues like the Kennewick man are

considerably important. If the Native Americans had not disputed the issue, <https://assignbuster.com/why-religion-is-important-to-a-society-philosophy-essay/>

such research performed on the Kennewick man may not have been done, especially within the 2-year span (1998) that it took to file the suit and make a federal case out of it.

-Conclusion

-Sum up the importance of Religion in Society

-Relate the Kennewick man to the sum

What is apparent about the Kennewick man is that the remains held significant anthropological research data. Moreover, it sparked enough controversy to cause rapid development in the science world. It is that sort of ingenuity that religion causes, which makes religion one of the most important aspects of society-at least, this is the case for now, until we figure out how to spark research interest without subjective takes on reality. That said, we can rightfully blame doctrines such as religions as relevant to the solutions we need in order to survive as an adapting species. Without imaginative ideas and emotional charges, we are left with brute logic, which has its constraints and is never consistently sound, as far as we have come to know as experimenters. Therefore, we owe religion the respect it deserves as a sparker of new ideas and new efforts. Without it, our ideas remain unchallenged, and without challenge, we fact a stifled perspective.