



In search of Belief

**Where** did your **beliefs** come from?

# Can we choose what we believe?, Giles Fraser. The Guardian

Some of our beliefs we hold after **conscious deliberation**. Others just seem to have been there forever, as a natural part of life. And sometimes, beliefs seem to **take hold of us**, almost against our wills. But how is the balance struck?

**Faith positions**, whether positive or negative, can take of these forms. There are careful, **slow rational** conversions and losses of faith; there are **sudden moments of enlightenment**, and for some people faith or lack of it is entirely taken for granted.

# How to Consciously Choose Your Beliefs, Ann Mercury, Medium

A belief is a **confirmation bias** you think is true. It's an ingrained **mental habit**— a pattern of thinking strong enough to **condition your thoughts**, your **actions**, and your life all on its own. You can hold beliefs that help you to achieve your goals, live happier and healthier, feel more satisfied or loved or free or worthy, and you can hold ones that create cycles of suffering and frustration. Beliefs **impact you constantly**, in small ways and large, so you might as well get **choosy** about the ones you're going to **keep**.

# How to Consciously Choose Your Beliefs, Ann Mercury, Medium

For most of us, throughout most of our lives, most of our beliefs are **unconscious**. Some of our mental habits got **ingrained** before we even learned object permanence. Our beliefs are **conditioned from infancy**, by our **families**, our **culture**, our **society**, our **circumstances**, our **friends**, our **media**, our everything. Your unconscious beliefs can come from anything, but what makes them unconscious is that they come from something **other** than you.

**Changing** your beliefs is **simple**, but that does not mean it's easy. Being told to "just change your beliefs" can feel deeply invalidating when your beliefs feel true, for understandable reasons.

Have you ever wondered how many **contradictory thoughts** you have in a day? How many times your **thoughts contradict your actions**? How often your **feelings oppose your principles and beliefs**? Most of the time, we don't see our own contradictions—it's often easier to observe such inconsistencies in others. But you are as full of contradictions as I am. We humans are structurally made of contradictions, living peacefully, sometimes painfully, with our oxymoronic selves.

Humans live peacefully with contradictions precisely because of their capacity to **compartmentalize**. And when contradictory statements, actions, or emotions jump out of their contextual box, we are very good, perhaps too good, at finding **justifications** to soothe **cognitive dissonance**. **David Berliner**

“Do I contradict myself? / Very well, then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.)” *Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (1855)*

# The biochemistry of belief, The National Center for Biotechnology Information

Beliefs are not just **cold mental premises**, but are ‘hot stuff’ intertwined with **emotions** (conscious or unconscious). Perhaps, that is why we feel threatened or react with sometimes uncalled for **aggression**, when we believe our beliefs are being challenged! Research findings have repeatedly pointed out that the emotional brain is no longer confined to the classical locales of the hippocampus, amygdala and hypothalamus. The sensory inputs we receive from the environment undergo a **filtering process** as they travel across one or more synapses, ultimately reaching the area of higher processing, like the frontal lobes. There, the sensory information enters our conscious awareness.

# The biochemistry of belief, The National Center for Biotechnology Information

What portion of this **sensory information** enters is determined by our **beliefs**. Fortunately for us, receptors on the cell membranes are flexible, which can alter in sensitivity and conformation. In other words, even when we feel stuck 'emotionally', there is always a biochemical potential for change and possible growth. When we choose to change our thoughts (bursts of neurochemicals!), we become open and receptive to other pieces of sensory information hitherto blocked by our beliefs! **When we change our thinking, we change our beliefs. When we change our beliefs, we change our behaviour.**

Mental assent

“I do **believe**, but help me overcome my **unbelief!**” Mark 9:24b

Changed behaviour

There is a **crisis** of belief in the church but not in the traditional understanding of it. Our behaviour is **misaligned** with our belief and the **world** has noticed. The conclusion is that perhaps we actually don't believe what we have been professing

Before we study other religions we have to **admit** to a few **realities**

On top of our unbelief problem there is another major issue, we don't know our own **sacred document (bible)**. This leads to many Christians allowing culture to **dictate** our interpretations

**Scripture Engagement** is at a historic low in America, registering now at just **19%** of American adults. The Bible Disengaged category grew by **45.2** million adults in a single year. This is the single largest disruption in Scripture Engagement ever recorded in the 12 years of conducting the [State of the Bible survey, 2022](#)

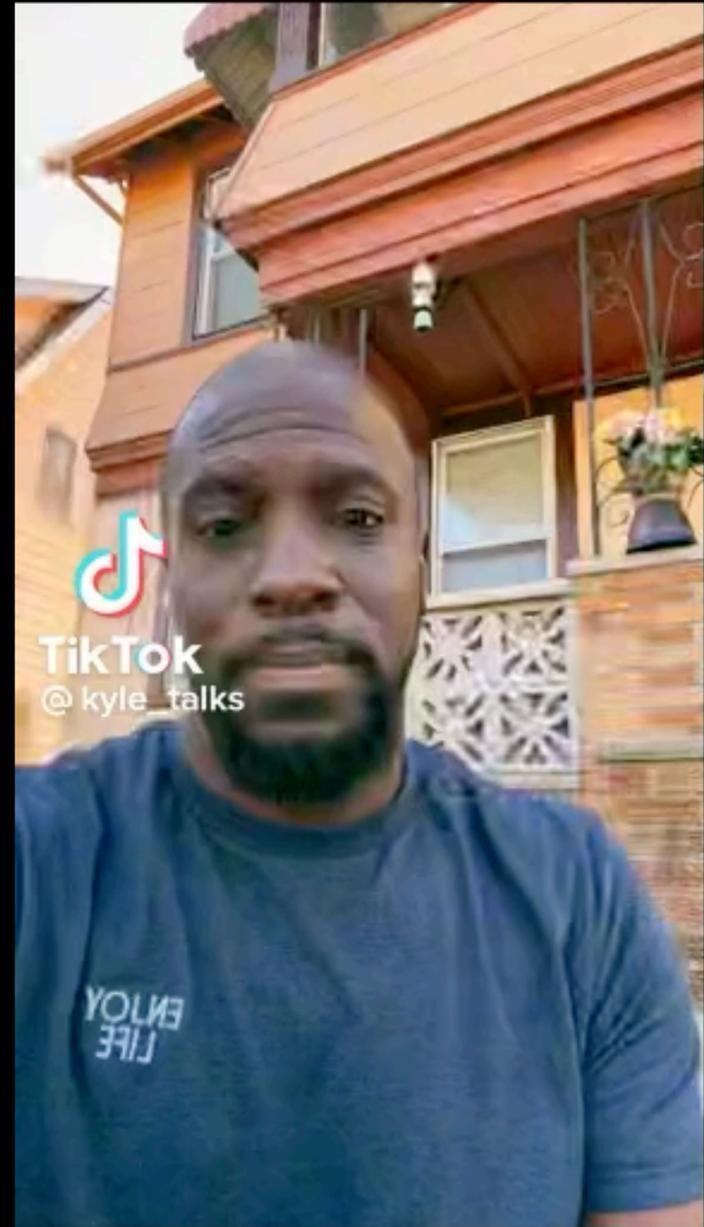
In the past year, nearly **26 million** Americans decreased or stopped interacting with Scripture

Just **14%** of Canadians read the Bible at least once a month Canadian [Bible Engagement Study 2014](#)

**64%** of Canadians think the scriptures of all major world religions teach essentially the same things.

**69%** of Canadians think the Bible has irreconcilable contradictions

Most christians have no  
clue how we got the bible,  
but they defend it as if they  
wrote it 🤔🤔



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After our **misalignment** of belief and behaviour. After our realization that we do not **understand/study** our sacred document. Then comes what the world would say is our “**arrogant** posture”

## Exclusivity of Christianity

Jesus answered, “I am the **way** and the truth and the life.  
**No one** comes to the Father except through **me**. [John 14:6](#)

Salvation is found in **no one else**, for there is **no other name** under heaven given to mankind by which we must be **saved**. [Acts 4:12](#)

When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the **detestable ways** of the nations there. [Deuteronomy 18:9](#)

You shall have **no other gods** before me. [Exodus 20:2](#)

## Exclusivity of Christianity

“To suggest that **1 out of 4200** religions holds all of the truth and the key to salvation is not only **arrogant**, it is spiritually **narcissistic**.” **Huffington Post contributor Terrance Thomas**

“A lot of young people are leaving the Church, in part because the way they understand what Christianity has become ... so **judgmental**, so **alienating** that they think to themselves, ‘well, I don’t need that.’” **Hillary Clinton**

Jesus **and...**

# Exclusivity of Christianity

Christ is narrow in **location** but broad in **invitation**. There are no restrictions based on a person's economic status, religious background, relative morality, geographical location, or family circumstances, for all are called to come to Christ **Derek J. Brown**

Misalignment

Sacred Document

Exclusivity

# End is Nigh

At that **time** many will **turn away** from the faith and will betray and **hate** each other, and many **false prophets** will appear and **deceive** many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow **cold**, [Matthew 24:10-12](#)

For the **time** will come when people will not put up with **sound doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of **teachers** to say what their **itching ears** want to hear. [2 Timothy 4:3](#)

**post-Christian** (post-kris'chen) n. [20th C. back formation from Christian.] **1.** Someone whom Christians would say is **not Christian**, but whom **non-Christians** consider Christian; applied by Gary Dorrien and other scholars to Unitarian Universalism and other groups formerly considered to be liberal Christians. **2.** One who tries to live according to Jesus's teachings, but who chooses to distance himself/herself from **conservative** or **fundamentalist** Christianity by refusing to be **called** "Christian." **3.** In certain cases, a non-theist or atheist who follows the **ethical teachings** of Jesus. **4.** An individual who resembles Christians **sociologically** but who does not hold Christian **theological** beliefs.

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found **wanting**. It has been found **difficult** and left **untried**.” G.K. Chesterton

“And some things that should not have been **forgotten** were **lost**. History became **legend**. Legend became **myth**. And for two and a half thousand years, the ring passed out of all knowledge.” Galadriel, *The Lord of the Rings*

“It is our **preference** that decides against Christianity, not **arguments**.” Friedrich Nietzsche (1844—1900)

What do you believe?

Why do you believe?

How do you believe?

“For **my thoughts** are not **your thoughts**,  
neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts. **Isaiah 55:8-9**”



Coldest Night of the Year  
Saturday February 25th

“Frosted Flakes”



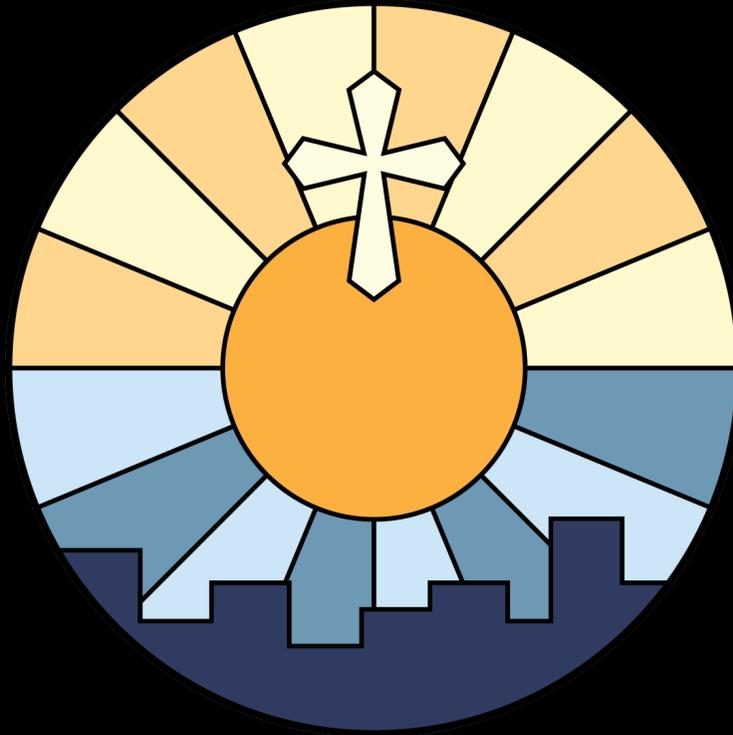


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