

Connections from Another Universe

by Science Fiction author Lynda Williams

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On Religion

The quintessential *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* line for me is: “Note to self, religion freaky.” I concluded as much as a teenager trying to make sense of the diverse religious convictions in my father’s family, while growing up in Prince George. I read a book named *How the Great Religions Began* by Joseph Gaer and decided there was definitely something universal underpinning the myriad manifestations of belief in the divine, although it might as easily have been a human need as an actual divinity of any sort. Now, having reached middle-age, I am back to square one on the question of belief in a Greater Good. I think we need it because science has pretty much flopped as a means of achieving peace on Earth through the techno-missionaries of corporate power. But I share Bill Maher’s fears, in his documentary film *Religulous*, about the threat posed by religious leaders to whom the destruction of life on earth is an acceptable risk in the single-minded pursuit of their own, particular dogma. Sadly, I am just as sceptical about the ability of the scientific world view to side-step the pitfall of usurpation by greedy bastards. I doubt, for example, that too many of the CEOs gleefully impoverishing pensioners in pursuit of yet another yacht were attending any kind of church except a bank. In my own work as a novelist, I’ve found answers not in the choice of one’s religion or lack thereof, so much as the integrity of individuals, and a zero tolerance attitude to the idea of anyone blowing up the world to make a point. *Part 2: Righteous Anger*, in the *Okal Rel* Saga, deals most directly with religious strife, but moral dilemmas underpin the tensions in most books. Morality itself has become my bottom line. I just haven’t figured out how to define it any better than the dramatic portrayal of decisions made by characters in the thought experiment of my science fiction saga. If forced to try, I think it would go something like this: If nine out of ten grandmothers from a reasonable cross-section of cultures say it’s evil, then it’s evil. Cut it out.