

# On Religious Indoctrination

Indoctrination is the “imbuing of an idea or opinion,” and imbue is “to soak, saturate, cause to absorb.” It would seem, then, that indoctrination implies coercion, either physical or social (loss of privilege, fear, shaming). Religion is “respect for what is sacred, conscientiousness, sense of right, moral obligation,” and religious is “imbued with or expressive of religious devotion.” Having thus defined these terms, can it be said that the idea or opinion imbued is always held religiously (be it theological, philosophical, political, etc.) by the one doing the imbuing? If so, then “indoctrination” is everywhere and always “religious.” Now, though all indoctrination is religious, that doesn’t mean that all religions are necessarily shared on the basis of indoctrination. Many find religion on their own or as a result of being impressed by another’s example of religious living. My point, however, is that if you insist on imbuing someone else with your ideas and opinions, you do so on the basis of compulsory religion. Is that really what you want to do? And that’s today’s two cents.

Skyler.