

Answering The New Atheists



Dr. Heinz Lycklama

heinz@osta.com

www.osta.com/messages

Angry about
Someone they
don't believe
exists!

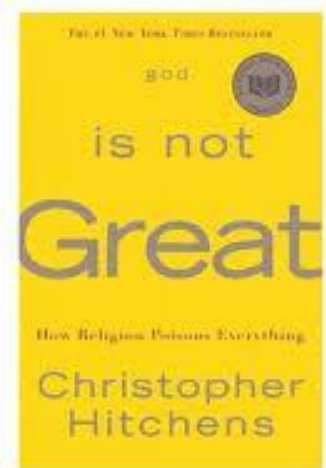
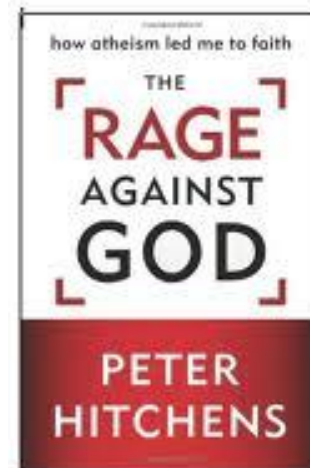
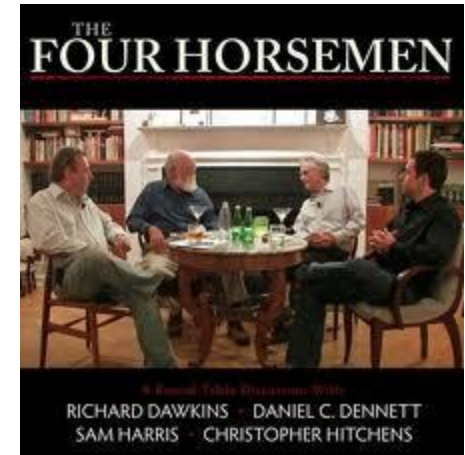
“Religion has run out of justifications. Thanks to the telescope and the microscope, it no longer offers an explanation of anything important.”

Christopher Hitchens

NEW ATHEISM
an old mistake?

The New Atheists

1. The New Atheism
2. The “Four Horsemen”
3. Their Books & Our Responses
4. Their Claims & Our Answers
 - Faith Is Blind
 - Atheism Is Not a Religion
 - Science Has Disproven God
 - There Is No Evidence For God
 - Religion Poisons Everything
 - Evil and Suffering Disprove God
 - Morality Does Not Come From God
 - Belief in Miracles is Superstition
5. In Conclusion



1. The New Atheism

- Atheist writers of the 21st century
- Religion:
 - Is based on blind faith
 - Poisons everything
- Religion should:
 - Not be tolerated
 - Be countered and criticized
 - Be exposed by rational arguments
- Recent scientific advancements
 - Less accommodating attitude toward religion, superstition, religious fanaticism





Some Principles of New Atheism

- All faith is folly, including moderate faiths
- Stop giving religion special treatment
- Bible offers no answers to suffering
- Religion is not the source of morality
- The universe is matter and nothing more
- Atheism is a positive philosophy
- Atheism is growing and coming out of the closet
- Godless societies are happier and healthier

2. The “Four Horsemen”



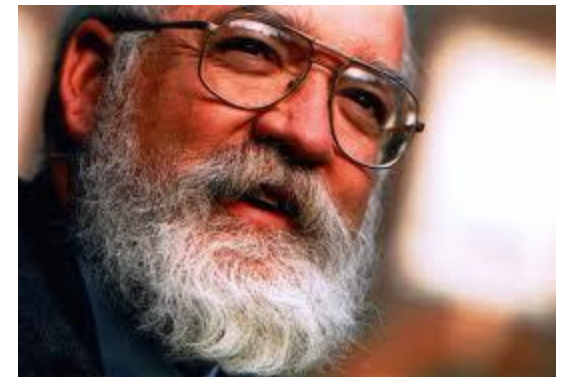
Richard Dawkins



Sam Harris



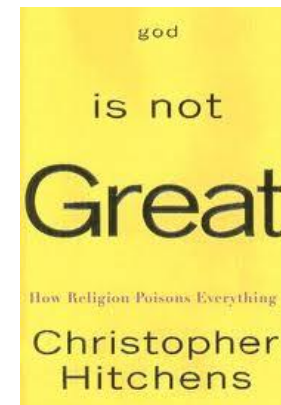
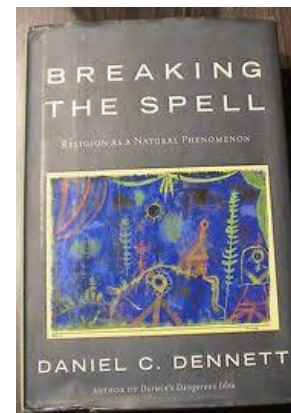
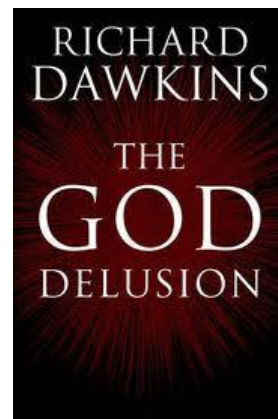
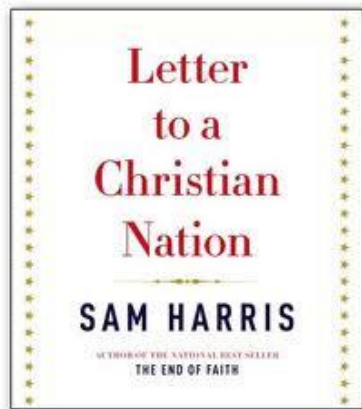
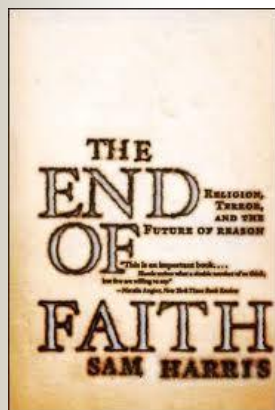
Christopher Hitchens



Daniel Dennett

3a. The New Atheists' Books

- The End of Faith, Sam Harris, 2004
- Letter to a Christian Nation, Sam Harris, 2006
- The God Delusion, Richard Dawkins, 2006
- Breaking the Spell, Daniel Dennett, 2006
- God is Not Great, Christopher Hitchens, 2007



The God Delusion – Dawkins

- Michael Ruse, atheist and Darwinist:

“*The God Delusion* makes me embarrassed to be an atheist ...”

- Thomas Nagel, atheist:

“... since Dawkins aims to overturn the convention of respect toward religion that belongs to the etiquette of modern civilization,” he resorts to “persistently violating the convention, and being as offensive as possible ...”

- H. Allen Orr, evolutionary geneticist:

“the most disappointing feature of *The God Delusion* is Dawkins’s failure to engage religious thought in any serious way.”



3b. Books in Response to the New Atheists

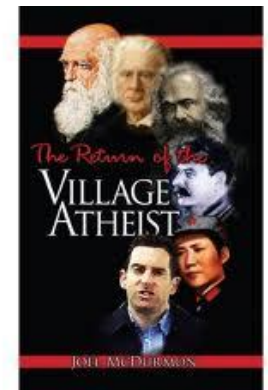
■ Doug Wilson

- Letter From a Christian Citizen
- God Is, How Christianity Explains Everything
- The Deluded Atheist



■ Phil Fernandes

- The Atheist Delusion



■ Joel McDurmon

- The Return of the Village Atheist

■ John Lennox

- Gunning For God



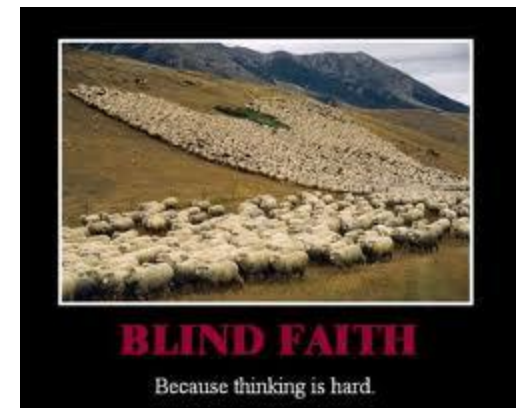


4. Claims of the New Atheists

1. Faith is blind
2. Atheism is not a Religion
3. Science has disproven God
4. There is no evidence for God
5. Religion poisons everything
6. Evil and human suffering disprove God
7. Morality doesn't come from God
8. Belief in miracles is superstition

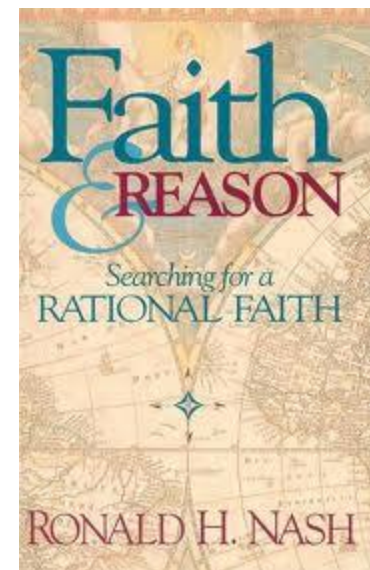
Claim #1 – Faith is Blind

- Faith and reason are mutually exclusive
 - Science alone is rational and evidence-based
 - Religious faith is blind, irrational, not evidence-based
- Scientists
 - Use reason
 - Science is evidence-based
- Religious people
 - Have thrown away reason
 - Faith is blind
 - Faith is belief without evidence



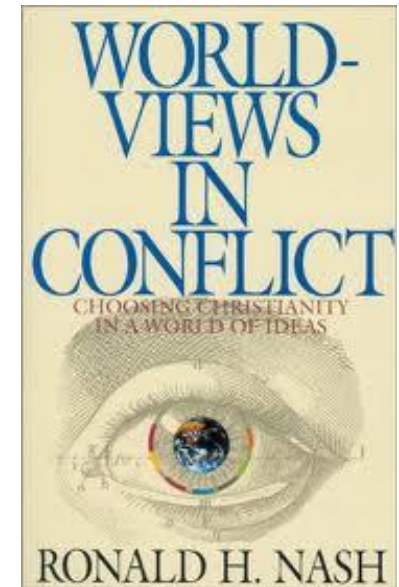
Answering “Faith is Blind”

- Mischaracterize the nature of faith
- Christian faith is evidence-based
- Faith and reason are rational
- Scientists place faith in the:
 - Reliability of the five senses
 - Existence of a real physical world
- Faith and reason are **NOT** mutually exclusive
- **NOT** a conflict between science and religion



A Conflict Between Worldviews

- Conflict between two worldviews
 - Not between Science and Religion
 - Between Naturalism and Supernaturalism
 - God & science are not alternative explanations for reality
 - Christianity has intellectual power
- Science is a weapon in a larger cultural war
- The question – is Christianity true?
 - Not – is it helpful?
 - Does science fit into this?
 - Does “what you believe to be true” match reality?





The Arguments

- **Separate** because: [**Materialist View**]
 - **Science** is based on evidence
 - **Faith** where there is no evidence
 - Rational vs. irrational
 - **Science** deals with reality; **Faith** everything else
- **Not separate** because: [**Christian View**]
 - God created the universe & the laws of nature
 - Laws of nature make science possible
 - **Science** and **Faith**/Christianity are complementary
 - **Science** flourished because of Christianity

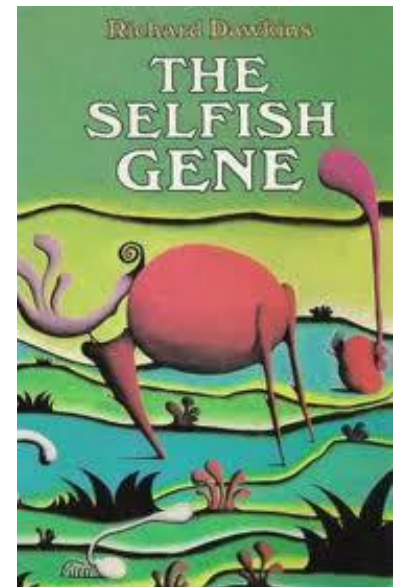
Claim #2 – Atheism is Not a Religion

- Religion
 - Blindly believed
 - Not evidence-based
 - Belief in God
- Atheism
 - Evidence-based
 - God does not exist
 - Nature is all there is



Origin of Religion (per Dawkins)

- Memes – cultural units of information
 - Transmitted from one generation to another
 - Kind of like a virus
 - Pre-scientific age explanation
 - No longer helps Evolution
- Presupposes that Evolution is true
 - Lacks explanatory power, e.g religion, morality, truth, etc.
 - ‘Memes’ cannot be observed
 - Memes rejected by most scientists



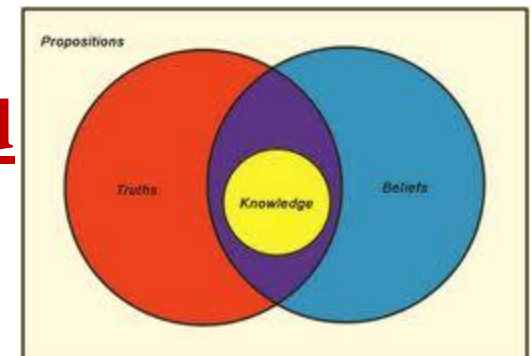
Answering “Atheism Not Religion”

- Dictionary definition:
 - Religion is a set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects
- U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1961
 - Secular Humanism (a form of atheism) considered a (non-theistic) religion
- Human Manifesto of 1933
 - Secular Humanism is a religion



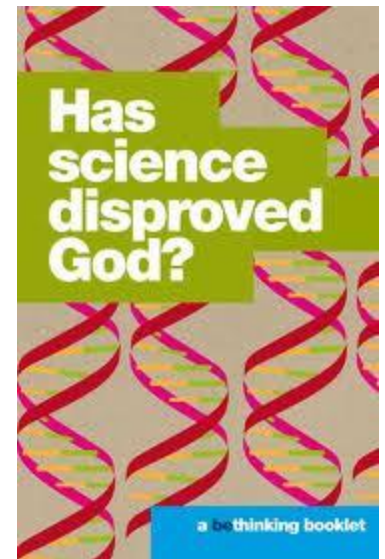
Everyone is Religious

- Not all reality is physical
 - Love, hope, joy
- Atheism tries to explain everything by means of physical causes
 - Atheism cannot explain everything
- If atheism is true, why are there so few atheists?
- Is my religion **confirmed** or **refuted** by the evidence?



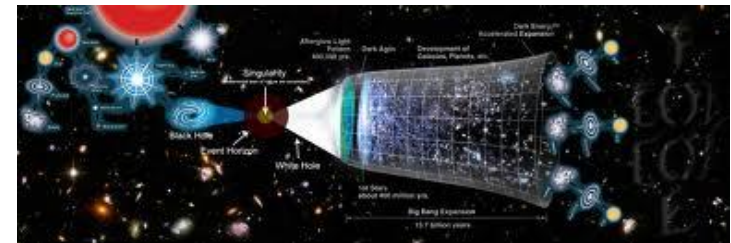
Claim #3 – Science Disproved God

- Evolution explains everything
 - Origin of the universe
 - Origin of first life
 - Origin of complex life forms
- Therefore no need for God
 - No scientific evidence
- Richard Dawkins
 - “God almost certainly does not exist”
 - Darwinian natural selection explains the “illusion of design” in living things
 - Multiverse theory explains our universe



Dawkins's Faulty Reasoning

- If a universe that can support life is highly improbable, then the cause (God) must be more improbable – Dawkins
- Only improbable if it came into existence by chance
- Must have been designed by an intelligent Being
- Dawkins asks “Who designed God?”
 - There must be a first cause



Chance, Necessity (Law) or Design?



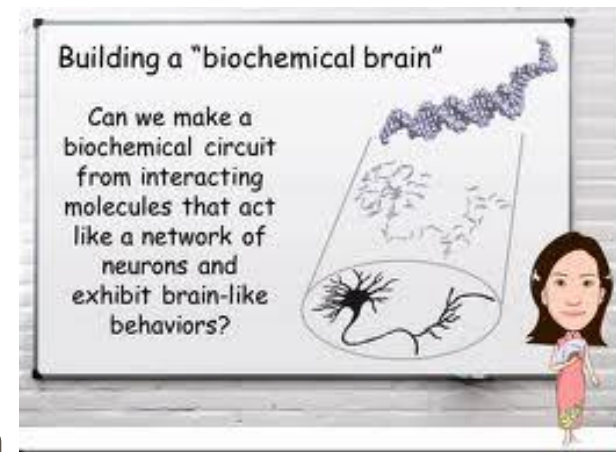
Limitations of Science

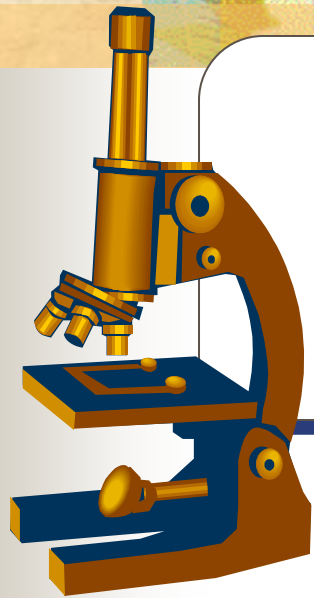
- Science the only way to find truth?
 - Use of the five senses
 - Presupposes reliability of 5 senses
 - Assumes that a real world exists
- Science presupposes truth is real
 - Honesty is a moral virtue
- Science limited in scope
 - Moral laws
 - Concept of truth
 - Meaning in life



More on Dawkins' Arguments

- All explanations must be physical/natural
- No non-physical or supernatural explanations
 - Ruled out a priori
 - Scientism biased against supernatural
- Validity of human reason required for our knowledge, otherwise can't trust the conclusions drawn by our reason
- If naturalism is true
 - No way to know it is true
 - Reason is by chance
 - No basis for faith in human reason





Present +
Repeatable +
Observable =
SCIENCE

Past +
Non-Repeatable +
Eyewitness Account =
HISTORY



Past +
Non-Repeatable +
No Eyewitnesses =
BELIEF

Claim #4 – No Evidence for God

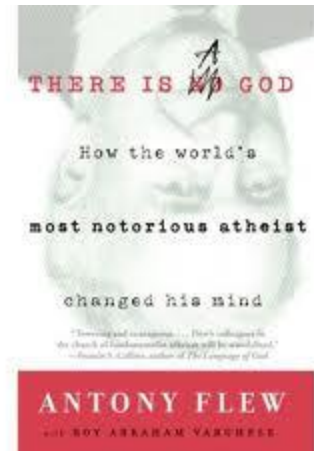
- Belief in God is irrational, superstitious, pre-scientific
- Naturalism precludes the supernatural
- Evolution does not need God
- The atheist's approach
 - Offense, not defense
 - Throw rocks
 - Mock Christianity
 - Can't defend atheism



Answering “No Evidence for God”

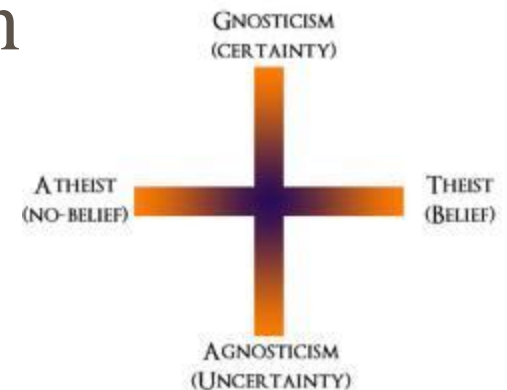
1. Classical arguments for God

- Cosmological
- Teleological
- Moral
- Ontological



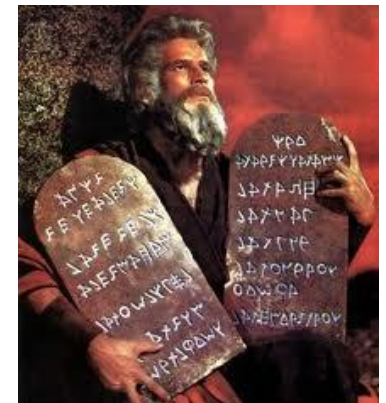
2. The best explanation for human experience in various areas?

- Theism or Atheism?



Arguments For God's Existence

- Cosmological argument
 - Beginning of the universe
- Teleological (Design) argument(s)
 - Design and order in the universe, e.g Anthropic Principle
 - Design of life
- Moral argument
 - Moral law implies a moral law giver
- Ontological argument
 - The concept of God – greatest conceivable and necessary Being





Evidence Supports Theism or Atheism?

- Kalam cosmological argument
- Design and order in the universe
- Possibility of human knowledge
- Reality of universal unchanging truths
- Existence of absolute moral laws
- Respect for human life
- Existence of evil (cause and defeat)
- Human consciousness
- Human free will and guilt

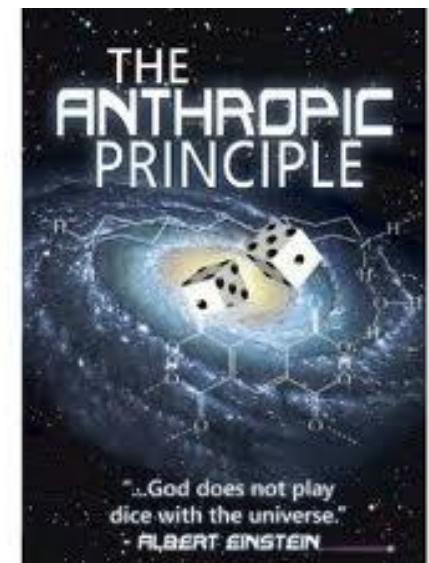
Kalam Cosmological Argument

- Three premises
 1. Whatever began to exist must have a cause
 2. The universe began to exist
 3. Thus, the universe had a cause
- Premise 1: Law of causality
- Premise 2: 2nd Law of thermodynamics
- Premise 3: The universe came into existence by an eternal, uncaused Cause (God)
- Chance or Law cannot explain the universe
- Beginning of the universe supports Theism



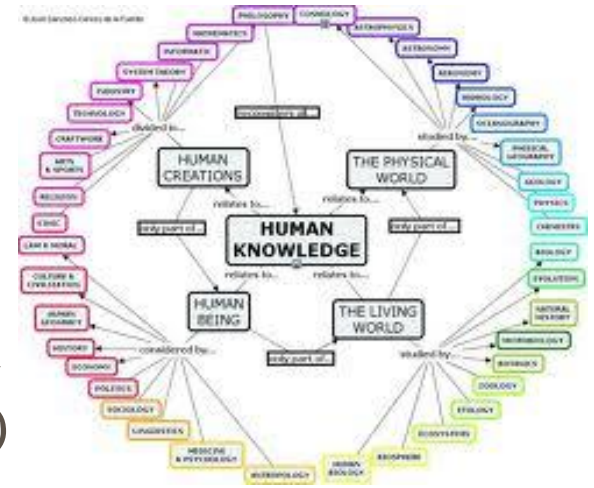
Evidence Supporting Theism #2

- Design and order found in the universe
 - Expansion rate of universe sustains life
 - Mathematical probability of origin of life by chance is essentially **zero** (0)
 - Single cell requires 1000 sets of encyclopedia for complex information
- Anthropic Principle
 - 25 narrowly defined parameters for life to be possible in the universe
 - 32 parameters for life concerning earth, moon, sun, galaxy
- ID more plausible than chance



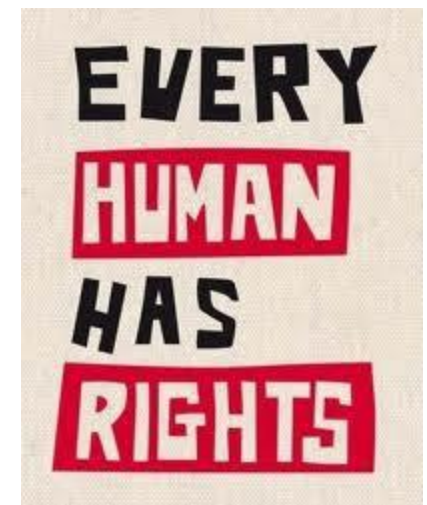
Evidence Supporting Theism #3

- Possibility of human knowledge
 - Does perception match reality?
 - Atheism cannot bridge the gap
 - Theism says a rational God created man in His image (a rational being)
 - Could human reasoning evolve from matter?
- Reality of universal unchanging truths
 - Denial of absolute truth is self-refuting
 - Agnosticism is self-refuting
 - Mathematical truths are discovered
 - Atheism has no basis for eternal truths



Evidence Supporting Theism #4

- Existence of absolute moral laws
 - Moral laws are prescriptive (ought)
 - This requires a Prescriber
 - Lawgiver must be eternal
 - Transcendent moral Lawgiver
 - Atheism has no basis for morality
- In Atheism, no respect for human life
 - Man has no more value than an animal
 - No basis for human rights
- In Theism, all men created equal
 - Basis for human rights



Evidence Supporting Theism #5

- Existence of evil (cause and defeat)
 - Atheists have no explanation
 - Atheists can't define evil
 - Atheists offer no solution
 - To Theists, evil is the perversion of good
- Human consciousness
 - Man is aware of his existence
 - Self-awareness didn't come by chance
 - Self-aware Being created man
- Human free will and responsibility
 - To Atheists, materialism -> no responsibility



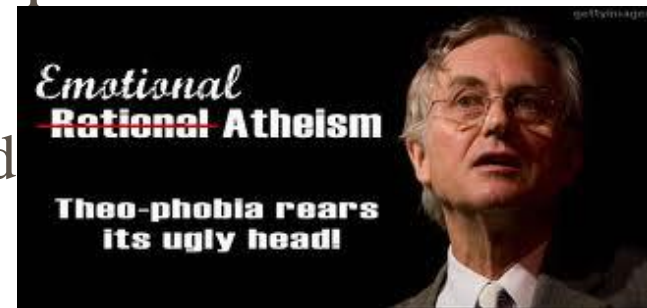
Human Self-Awareness & Self-Reflection

<p>Self-awareness is the awareness that one exists as an individual being. Without self-awareness the self perceives and accepts the thoughts that are occurring to be who the self is. Self-awareness gives one the option or choice to choose thoughts being thought rather than simply thinking the thoughts that are stimulated from the accumulative events leading up to the circumstances of the moment.</p>	<p>"I think, therefore I am"</p>  <p>"I think, therefore I exist, as a thing that thinks."</p>	<p>Self-reflection is the capacity of humans to exercise introspection and the willingness to learn more about their fundamental nature, purpose and essence. The earliest historical records demonstrate the great interest which humanity has had in itself. Human self-reflection invariably leads to inquiry into the human condition and the essence of humankind as a whole.</p>
--	--	---

The Evidence Supports Theism

■ Atheism fails to explain human experience

- Atheists can't live a consistent life
- Must live as if human life is sacred
- Must live as if life has meaning
- Rational statements require rational context
- Atheist's beliefs are not rational



■ Theism explains human experience

- The universe and life require a Designer
- A rational Being created rational humans
- Theism is a more reasonable explanation



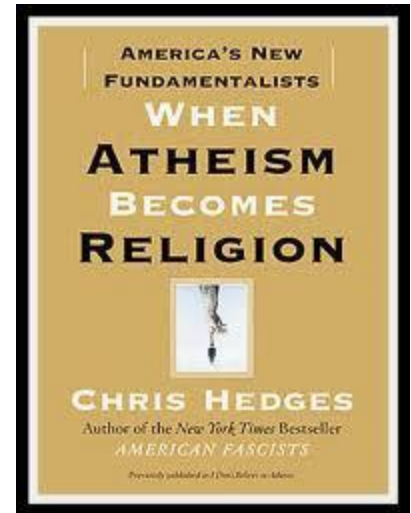
Claim #5 – Religion Poisons Everything

- To Atheists, Atheism is not a religion
- World's wars/violence due to religion
- Christianity is evil -> evil results, e.g.
 - The Crusades
 - The Inquisition
 - Northern Ireland
 - Rwanda, Sudan, etc.
- Death/violence not due to Atheism
 - Atheistic communists murdered tens of millions, despite their atheism, not because of their atheism



The Christian's Response

- Atheism is a religion
- Each society has a worldview/religion
- Government of that society influenced by that worldview
- Power-hungry leaders force their worldview on their subjects
- All human governments are based on presuppositions
- False religions spoil everything
- Atheism – bloodiest false religion of 20th century



Only a Fool

would follow a False religion

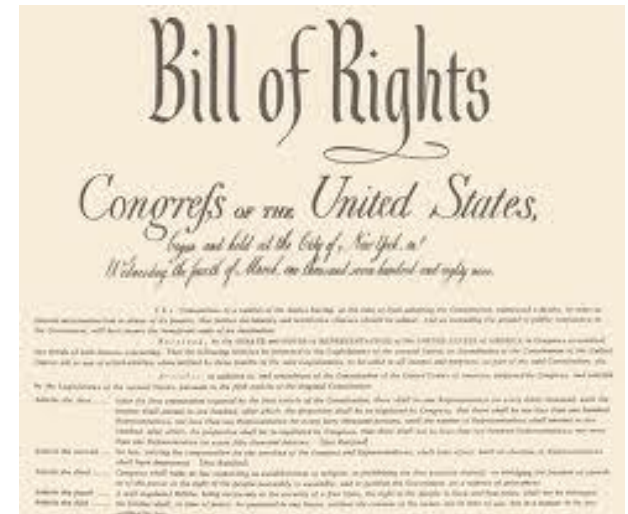
False Religions exposed!



http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/False%20Religions/false_religions.htm

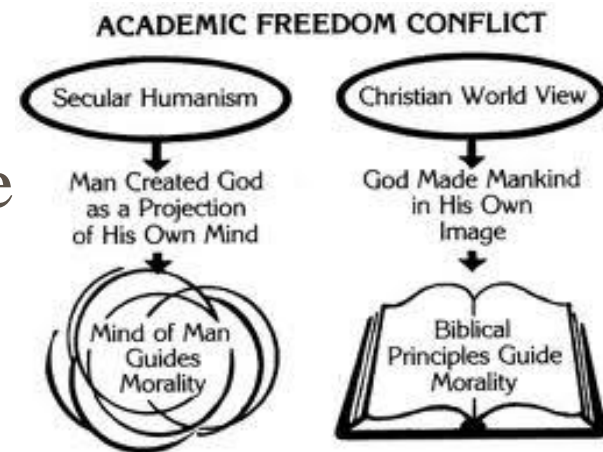
Christian Worldview

- U.S. founded on Christian worldview
- Men created in God's image
- All men were created equal
- All men have God-given rights
- Human life is sacred and to be protected
- Human government ruled by sinful men
 - Limited power of government officials
 - System of checks and balances
 - Rejection of one world government



Atheism/Secular Humanism

- One world socialistic government
- No basis for sanctity of human life
- Man is the ultimate authority
- Dawkins' view:
 - “I do not believe there is an atheist in the world who would bulldoze Mecca, ..., York Minster or Notre Dame, ..., the Buddhas of Bamivan”
- Margaret Sanger, Planned Parenthood founder:
 - “Inferior” races should be exterminated
- Eugenics, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia



Deaths by Atheist Regimes

- Deaths in the 20th century, many by their own government
 - Soviet Union – 60M
 - China – 72M
 - Cambodia (Pol Pot) – 3M
 - North Korea (Kim) – 2M
 - Nazis in Germany – 21M
 - Cuba, Rwanda, Sudan, Vietnam, etc.
- More deaths (200M+) than in all of man's wars in history



If God is dead, then all things are possible!”, Dostoyevsky



Militant Islamic Worldview

- Shi'ite sect of Islam
 - Ayatollah is infallible spokesman for God
 - Replaces God as highest authority
- Sunni sect of Islam
 - Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia
 - Deobandi movement in India/Pakistan
 - Use force to purify the Islamic faith
- Koran & Hadith
 - Call for conquest by the sword
 - No religious freedom for non-Muslims



Other False Religions

- Polytheism/Animism [Africa, S. America]
 - Occultism, anarchy, human sacrifice
 - Suppress the rights of their people
- Pantheism, e.g. Hinduism
 - Reincarnations, karma, caste system
- German Volk religion
 - Pantheistic ideology, Aryan race divine
 - Hitler, fullest manifestation of the divine
 - Non-Aryan races regarded as “sub-human”
 - Killed 6M Jews and 14M others

Christian Atrocities?

■ Inquisition

- Killing/torturing those opposed to the Pope
- Killing of Jews who would not convert
- The church corrupted by Roman empire
- 3 to 6 thousand deaths



■ Crusades

- Defense of Eastern Church against Muslim invaders
- Actions ordered by Church of Rome
- 1M+ deaths



■ Not all professing believers are genuine

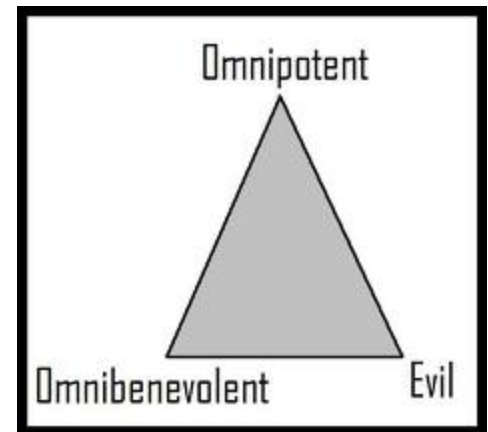
Claim #6 – Evil Disproves God

- The existence of evil and human suffering shows that God does not exist
 - If God created everything that exists
 - If God is all-loving
 - If God is all-powerful
- Problems of evil
 - Metaphysical: evil created by an all-good God?
 - Moral: the evil choices of men
 - Physical: natural disasters and human suffering
 - Personal: traumatic experiences



Answer – God and Evil

- Metaphysical problem of evil
 - Evil is real, not an illusion
 - Evil is the absence of a good that should be there
 - God allowed the possibility of evil by giving men free will
 - Men are responsible for evil through the abuse of free will
 - Deals with the origin and reality of evil
- If God does not exist, there are also no objective moral values
 - Atheists know this!





Moral Problem of Evil

- Free will necessitates the possibility of evil
- God allowed evil for the purpose of a greater good
- Without evil there could be no good shown
- God is not required to create the best possible world
- Atheist denies existence of objective evil because that admits the existence of the absolute moral law
 - But then uses evil to disprove the existence of God?
- God guarantees that evil will ultimately be defeated

Physical Problem of Evil

- Examples:
 - Natural disasters
 - Death of innocent children
- Explanations for physical evil
 - Necessary for moral perfection
 - Human choices can cause physical evil
 - Caused by choices of demons
 - As a moral warning
 - To get our attention
- Existence of God and evil are not mutually exclusive



God Deals With the Problem of Evil

- The biblical God guarantees that evil will ultimately be defeated through Christ's death, resurrection, return
 - God offers a way of salvation
 - God has reasons for allowing evil and human suffering
- The God of Deism no longer involved with this world, e.g. evil
- In Pantheism, evil is an illusion
- In Atheism, there is no basis for calling anything evil



Claim #7 – Morality is Not From God

- Moral laws are relative
 - There are no moral absolutes
 - Moral absolutes have no justification without God's existence
- Moral laws are in a state of change
 - Moral laws evolved into existence
 - Compassion is based on Evolution
- Each person decides what is right for himself
- Man is free to create his own values
- There is no objective meaning to life



Answer – Morality IS From God

- God determines what is right
- Even atheists know evil when they are wronged
 - They appeal to an objective universal law
 - Moral relativists live by absolute moral laws in their everyday lives
 - How can they call Hitler's actions wrong?
- Cannot appeal to world or society consensus
- The absolute moral law is eternal and unchanging
 - Points to an absolute moral law Giver above all men
- Can atheists be moral? Yes, all have a conscience



Claim #8 – Belief in Miracles is Superstition

- Pre-scientific superstition
 - Not rational
- Assume that miracles are impossible
 - Miracles violate the laws of nature
 - They do not have a natural cause
- Thus reject the Bible because of its claims of miracles
- Philosophical arguments by:
 - Benedict Spinoza (1632-77), a pantheist
 - David Hume (1711-76), a deist



Answering “Miracles & Superstition”

- Miracles supersede laws of nature
 - This is by definition
- Refuting Spinoza and Hume
 - A pantheistic god is impersonal but does not exist
 - The theistic God exists, is personal, and can choose to perform miracles
 - Miracle claims should be examined if there are reliable eyewitnesses
 - God can intervene in, and work miracles in, His universe





More Claims of the New Atheists

- The Bible is not historically reliable
- There is no historical evidence for Jesus
- Jesus did not rise from the dead
- Teaching children about God is child abuse
- The God of the Bible is a despot
- The atonement is morally repellent
- The laws of physics themselves brought the universe into existence
- The multiverse explains the finely tuned parameters of a universe that supports life



5. In Conclusion

- Christian faith is rational, evidence-based, not blind
- Atheism is a religion
- New Atheists are more aggressive, but offer no new evidence for their belief system
- Science does not disprove God
- Science is possible because of a Creator
- Origin of the universe requires a Designer
- Origin of first life form requires a Designer
- Origin of complex life forms requires a Designer
- False religions poison everything
- Theism offers a more rational response than Atheism
- The New Atheists Don't Have a Case!

The New Atheists Don't Have a Case!

Thank you
for your
attention!

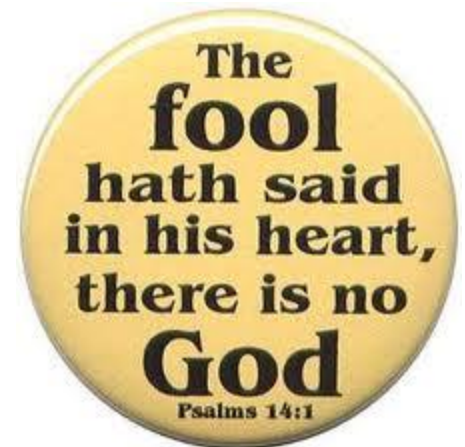


Dr. Heinz Lycklama

heinz@osta.com

www.osta.com

www.osta.com/messages





Some Reference Books

- God Is Not Great. How Religion Poisons Everything, Christopher Hitchens
- God Is. How Christianity Explains Everything, Douglas Wilson
- Letter to a Christian Nation, Sam Harris
- Letter from a Christian Citizen, Douglas Wilson
- The God Delusion, Dr. Richard Dawkins
- The Deluded Atheist, Douglas Wilson
- The Atheist Delusion, Phil Fernandes
- The Return of the Village Atheist, Joel McDurmon
- Gunning For God. Why The New Atheists Are Missing The Target, Dr. John Lennox
- More Than a Carpenter, Josh & Sean McDowell
- The Grand Design, Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow
- God and Stephen Hawking, Dr. John Lennox