

*X30 – EXchanging Worldviews, 30:
EXploring Prospects for Peace & Prosperity, 22:
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EXterminating the God Meme, through 4:
EXcluding Theists from Cooperative Activities*

Dear: My goal for this chapter is to begin to show you what I mean by the fourth part of my proposed four-part strategy for dealing with religious people, especially religious fundamentalists; I'll show you more in the next two chapters. Again, the four-part strategy is the same as kids use to "handle" other kids who are "real brats":

- 1) Ridicule their ideas and their "heroes",
- 2) Set a better example,
- 3) Explain to them what they're doing wrong and what would be better, and
- 4) Exclude them from cooperative activities [this chapter].

Actually, there's a fifth method to "handle" kids who are "real brats", namely, talk to their mothers about them. In the case of mothers who are religious fundamentalists, however, talking to them is normally worse than useless: it's the mothers who programmed their kids to behave as they do! Therefore, a separate problem (addressed in X-32 and in a recent post¹ at one of my blogs) is to try to change, also, the mothers of the kids who are real brats – especially Muslim mothers who, one way or another, have caused their children to become terrorists.

By the way, Dear, if you object to my analogy of treating "true believers" like little kids who are "real brats", then again I'd ask you to consider the psychological basis for the proposal. Thus, whereas the beliefs of religious people are primarily derived from their emotions, then an obvious method to counteract the problems caused by theists is to expose them to emotions stronger than the "warm feelings" they derive from their "belief" that they're special. And an even stronger emotion (than the "warm feelings" that they get by "thinking" that an imaginary creator of the universe protects them and even loves them) is the shame they'll feel when real, rational, and reasonable people give them the "cold shoulder", ridiculing them and excluding them from cooperative activities.

¹ See the 7 June 2008 post, "Some new 'old wives' tales", at <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com>.

Immediately, maybe I should provide an example of what I mean by “excluding theists” and, also, admit that implementing this fourth strategy (exclusion) can be difficult. A good example of such an exclusionary policy is Europe’s refusal to admit Turkey (the most secular of all Muslim nations) into the European Union until the threat diminishes that the Turkish government will be taken over by theocrats. With respect to the difficulty of implementing exclusionary policies, consider the case of the US. In this country, a major difficulty (of implementing any policy attempting to constrain any religious group from gaining significant political or economic power) is that, in spite of our Constitution’s requirement for the separation of church and state, only 10 – 20% of Americans are Humanists. That is, we Humanists are in the minority; therefore, the more common “exclusion” is for theists to exclude us!

SEPARATION OF RELIGION & STATE

In the US, however, at least there’s the tremendous design (thanks especially to Jefferson and Madison) that has caused the theists to be splintered; that is, we have no “official” state religion. As Jon Meacham wrote:²

Thomas Jefferson said that his bill for religious liberty in Virginia was “meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahometan [Muslims], the Hindu, and infidel of every denomination.” When George Washington was inaugurated in New York in April 1789, Gershom Seixas, the hazan of Shearith Israel, was listed among the city’s clergymen (there were 14 in New York at the time) – a sign of acceptance and respect. The next year, Washington wrote the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, R.I., saying, “happily the government of the United States... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance... Everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.”

Consequently, if any specific religious group (Hindus, any Jewish sect, any of the huge number of Christian sects, Sunni, Shia, or other Muslim sects, Mormons, whatever) tries to gain significant political or economic power, then most of the other religious groups yell, “Foul!” – as do all secular humanists.

² “A Nation of Christians is Not a Christian Nation”, 7 October 2007, *The New York Times*, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/07/opinion/07meacham.html?em&ex=1191988800&en=14109fa6c7f73277&ei=5087%0A>.

Cracks in the Wall Separating Religion & State

Yet, in spite of protection from the wall separating church and state (or better, separating “religion and state”), two major cracks have appeared.³ In the US, one crack has occurred because essentially all religious groups (certainly all Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Mormon sects) want “some” influence of religion (i.e., “God”) in matters of the state (e.g., in the Pledge of Allegiance, on our currency, at various ceremonies, etc.). That crack, alone, wouldn’t be of much concern to Humanists, but simultaneously, the majority of theists reject political roles for atheists (better described as secular or scientific humanists) – although during the past 50 years, some progress has been made. For example, according to a 20 February 2007 Gallup Poll,⁴

Only about one in five [20% of] Americans said they would vote for an atheist [for President] when the item was first asked in the late 1950s, compared with 45% today. Just 26% said they would support a homosexual presidential candidate in 1978, compared with the current 55%.

Thus, the majority of American voters continue to rank presidential candidates who are atheists as “least electable” (among the groups identified in the poll), but at least, that majority is diminishing.

³ Dear: See http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/ed_buckner/quotations.html for a thorough review of historical quotations dealing with the establishment of the separation between church and state in the US. The following quotation from this review may be particularly interesting:

To conclude this discussion of the religious clauses of the First Amendment, let’s talk some more about Thomas Jefferson and his ‘wall’. Some TV preachers, as well as writers, politicians, and, worst of all, Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist, have sought to pull down the wall by disparaging Jefferson’s influence on the First Amendment. A popular bit of historical revisionism that floats around these days goes something like this: Jefferson served as ambassador to France during the writing of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. He had no hand in their preparation and passage because he was out of the country. Therefore, his metaphor about the “wall of separation” is misplaced and ill informed because he was living in France and was out of touch. Tommyrot! Thomas Jefferson was James Madison’s mentor. Madison as the chief architect of both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights drew heavily from Jefferson’s ideas and kept in regular contact with his fellow Virginian even though the latter lived in France. Volumes of correspondence exist between the two men as they discussed the day’s crucial events. Jefferson understood that the First Amendment created a separation between church and state because he, more than most of the Founders, gave form and substance to the nation’s understanding of how the two institutions should best relate in the new nation. Some politicians, lawyers, and preachers subject us to mental cruelty when they disparage Jefferson’s interpretation simply because he lived in France during the years of the Constitution’s framing. [Robert L. Maddox, Baptist minister and speech writer and religious liaison for President Jimmy Carter, *Separation of Church and State: Guarantor of Religious Freedom*, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1987, pp. 67-68.]

⁴ Reported at <http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=26611>.

A second major crack in the wall separating religion and state has been caused by an alignment of the “Christian Right” (or better, “Christian Reich”, mostly Evangelical Christians but also the more conservative, pope-obeying Catholics and most Mormons) with the Republican Party. I’ve commented on this collusion in earlier chapters; therefore, I won’t go into details again. Instead and to remind you, I’ll just list a few characteristics of the trend: anti-science, unconstitutional government funding of “faith-based” initiatives, a definite (and deformed) tilt of the Supreme Court toward placating religious fundamentalists, and pro-Zionist foreign policy (consistent with the nonsense of “end-time” Christian fundamentalists). And although probably no single item in that list of “characteristics” of the collusion between the Christian Reich and the Republicans is sufficient to stimulate me to encourage excluding theists from cooperative activities, together the items reveal a trend sufficient for me to begin to complain:

Hey, now, wait a minute: is this a democracy or a theocracy?

To that, I add the data that show, in the main, that it’s the least educated among the American public who promote such idiocies. For example, the report on the same Gallup poll referenced above states:

Apart from ideology, there are also differences according to educational attainment. Those who have attended college are in general more likely to support [presidential] candidates with any of the [listed] characteristics than those with a high school education or less. That is especially the case in regard to candidates who are Hispanic (93% among college-educated versus 76% among non-college educated), Mormon (79% versus 62%), [Presidential candidates who are over 70] years of age (63% versus 48%), homosexual (62% versus 43%), and atheist (52% versus 32%).

Thus, roughly two-thirds of Americans $[(100 - 32)\% = 68\%]$ who don’t have a high-school education are so poorly informed that they wouldn’t vote for a presidential candidate who is an atheist. I therefore feel Isaac Asimov’s frustration and anger:

Imagine the people who believe such things and who are not ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking minds through all the centuries... And it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly...

* Go to other chapters *via*

CORRUPTION OF SOCIETIES BY THEISTS

I, too, “resent it bitterly” – and not just because such nut-cakes (“these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all”) are personal “pains in the butt” but also because, as I’ve charged in earlier chapters, they corrupt their societies, corrupting public discourse and cooperative activities, and thereby, they undermine democracy.

Corruption of Public Discourse by Theists

In earlier chapters (including **P9**, dealing with “Problems that Religions Cause Societies”), I already tried to show you how theists corrupt public discourse. As an additional example (mentioned in the previous chapter and described⁵ in more detail at one of my blogs), consider the word that theists use to describe secular or scientific humanists, i.e., ‘atheists’.

Theists claim that they’re “the good guys” (because they “believe” – in the absence of evidence) and label “the bad guys”, the “unbelievers, as “atheists” (using the Greek prefix *a* to negate *theist*, which is derived from the Greek word *theos*, meaning ‘god’ – just as the word ‘atom’, meaning ‘indivisible’, is derived by using the Greek prefix *a* to negate the Greek verb *temnein* meaning ‘to cut’). Well, we scientific humanists can play that game, too. We’re evaluators. We hold our beliefs only as strongly as relevant evidence warrants; so, that makes the theists the ‘unevaluators’, i.e., ‘dupes’ (or ‘dopes’). Or, given that we’re scientific humanists, that makes them *unscientific antihumanists* – or even, ***unscientific antihumans!***

To glance at how theists corrupt public discourse and cooperative activities, thereby undermining democracy, reconsider even just the first clause of Jefferson’s 1787 statement in his letter to Colonel Carrington:

The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

Jefferson’s statement (with which, of course, I agree) – that the basis of a democratic government (i.e., rule by people) is the opinion of the people – begs the question: **Yes, but, who or what controls public opinion?**

⁵ For more on this, see one of my January 2008 posts at my blog: <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com>.

For example, how did 80% of Americans in the late 1960s and 55% in 2007 form the opinion that they wouldn't vote for a presidential candidate who was an "atheist" (or scientific humanist)? How did similar (but slightly smaller) percentages reach similar conclusions about presidential candidates who were homosexuals? It appears that whoever has the ability (skill or skullduggery, funding and mechanisms, communicative or coercive abilities, etc.) to control public opinion can control even a democratic government.

Corruption of Democracy by Theocrats

The following quotation explains the problem well [to which I've added some notes in brackets and some italics].⁶

GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY: THE PATH AHEAD

By David C. Korten, Nicanor Perlas, and Vandana Shiva

Herein lies an important and little understood lesson regarding the division of functions among the political, economic, and civic spheres. There is a widespread, but mistaken, assumption that political participation belongs exclusively to the institutions of the political sphere. In fact, there is an essential division of political roles between the political and the civic spheres. The democratic function of the political sphere is to codify the values and standards of the prevailing cultural consensus in law and public policy through negotiation and compromise, and to provide for legal enforcement when a failure of voluntary compliance presents a threat to the interests and well being of the community. Thus, in a democracy the proper function of the political system is, not to lead or create the cultural consensus that defines the political context, but to seek the possible within the limits of that context.

Popular participation in the processes of dialogue and consensus formation by which the society defines itself is the heart and soul of living democracy. Creating a new cultural consensus that redefines the political context to create new possibilities is properly the work of civil society. When civil society abandons this role to the political or economic [or theological!] spheres, democracy dies.

When politicians and bureaucrats [and especially theocrats!] use their coercive powers to exert leadership behind agendas that diverge from the existing cultural consensus we call it dictatorship. When business uses its economic power to buy the political agenda we call it corruption. When state and business leadership merges to impose a nationalistic rightwing agenda (empire), we call it fascism. In each case the institutions of democracy have failed and the democratic process has been denied. Only when leadership behind the setting of public agendas comes from civil society can we truly call it democracy.

⁶ Copied from <http://www.pcdf.org/civilsociety/path.htm>.

We have the right – indeed the obligation – to hold government accountable when it ignores the popular will. However, when we assail government for failing to provide leadership in directions not supported by an evident cultural consensus, we engage in a contradiction. *A truly democratic government is not supposed to lead.* It is supposed to respond to the leadership of “We the people.” It can only do so, however, to the extent that civil society fulfills its essential leadership role.

In developing this leadership we must be aware of the stark contrast between leadership for empire and leadership for community. The imperial leader builds personal power by motivating followers to submit to his or her personal authority, values, and definition of purpose. Leadership for community involves a process of mutual empowerment that encourages every person to recognize and express their capacities for leadership on behalf of the whole in the service of *values authentically their own.*

The root of theistic corruption of societies is, then, that numbskulls who buy into the clerics’ con games don’t have “*values authentically their own*”. In the main, ever since childhood, such people have been indoctrinated in values dictated by the clerics – values eagerly adopted by the people in their greed to acquire what they manifestly don’t deserve, i.e., eternal life in paradise with the rest of the “good guys” who “believe” in the absence of evidence, because it makes them “feel good” to “believe” such balderdash.

Thereby, societies are pushed and shoved in various and conflicting directions by a bunch of petty theocrats whose prime goals are to maintain their powers over their groups. One group of theocrats (e.g., Mormon leaders) dictates that “*homosexuality is an abomination before the Lord*”, and the moronic Mormon masses nod in approval and try to influence public policy in the way that they’ve been told will ensure their eternal bliss in their fantasy “celestial paradise”. Another group of theocrats (e.g., Roman Catholics in the Vatican) dictates that chemical or physical (but not mathematical!) methods of birth control is another “*abomination before the Lord*”, and the mentally challenged Catholic masses nod in approval and try to influence public policy in the way that they’ve been told will assure their eternal bliss in their fantasy “heaven”. And so on – and in the case of Muslims, it’s in spades: their theocrats advocate that unbelievers (i.e., scientific humanists) be murdered! Such stupidity tromps on the heart and soul of democracy: reasonable discussion of issues to develop consensus based, not on make believe, but on the scientific method.

Of course, it's not just theocrats who corrupt public discourse and cooperative activities: anyone who has control of some propaganda machine has potential to do similar (witness Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and all dictators). Jefferson saw the solution to be a free press, but probably didn't foresee how the press would be corrupted by "televangelicals", "media empires", and sensationalism (i.e., media from "tabloids" to TV-sitcoms and from pornography to Mel Gibson "movies") that cater to the most ignoble inclinations of humans. But whereas a certain trouble-making grandchild asked me "only" why I don't believe in God, I'll continue to push aside the problems caused by other ideologues and to try to focus on the "sick social policies" derived from religions.

Data & Their Misinterpretations

In that regard and before trying to show you what I recommend be done to exclude such unscientific antihumans (aka "theists") from cooperative activities, I probably should provide you with more evidence to support my indictment that theists corrupt cooperative activities, since this indictment may seem to contradict substantial data – a definite "no-no" for anyone who claims to be a scientist! Yet, as I'll now try to show you, it appears, not that the data are wrong, but that their usual interpretations are.

For example, consider the following statements made by Joanthan Haidt (Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia) in an article for *Edge – The Third Culture* entitled "Moral Psychology and the Misunderstanding of Religion":⁷

In what follows I will take it for granted that religion is a part of the natural world that is appropriately studied by the methods of science. Whether or not God exists (and as an atheist I personally doubt it), religiosity is an enormously important fact about our species. There must be some combination of evolutionary, developmental, neuropsychological, and anthropological theories that can explain why human religious practices take the various forms that they do, many of which are so similar across cultures and eras. I will also take it for granted that religious fundamentalists, and most of those who argue for the existence of God, illustrate the first three principles of moral psychology (intuitive primacy, post-hoc reasoning guided by utility, and a strong sense of belonging to a group bound together by shared moral commitments)... [H]ere's my definition of morality, which gives each side a chance to make its case:

⁷ Copied from http://edge.org/3rd_culture/haidt07/haidt07_index.html.

Moral systems are interlocking sets of values, practices, institutions, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible.

In my research I have found that there are two common ways that cultures suppress and regulate selfishness, two visions of what society is and how it ought to work. I'll call them the *contractual* approach and the *beehive* approach.

The contractual approach takes the individual as the fundamental unit of value. The fundamental problem of social life is that individuals often hurt each other, and so we create implicit social contracts and explicit laws to foster a fair, free, and safe society in which individuals can pursue their interests and develop themselves and their relationships as they choose.

Morality is about happiness and suffering (as [Sam] Harris says, and as John Stuart Mill said before him), and so contractualists are endlessly trying to fine-tune laws, reinvent institutions, and extend new rights as circumstances change in order to maximize happiness and minimize suffering. To build a contractual morality, all you need are the two individualizing foundations: harm/care and fairness/reciprocity. The other three foundations [ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity], and any religion that builds on them, run afoul of the prime directive: let people make their own choices, as long as they harm nobody else.

The beehive approach, in contrast, takes the group and its territory as fundamental sources of value. Individual bees are born and die by the thousands, but the hive lives for a long time, and each individual has a role to play in fostering its success. The two fundamental problems of social life are attacks from outside and subversion from within. Either one can lead to the death of the hive, so all must pull together, do their duty, and be willing to make sacrifices for the group. Bees don't have to learn how to behave in this way, but human children do, and this is why cultural conservatives are so heavily focused on what happens in schools, families, and the media.

Conservatives generally have a more pessimistic view of human nature than do liberals. They are more likely to believe that if you stand back and give kids space to grow as they please, they'll grow into shallow, self-centered, undisciplined pleasure seekers. Cultural conservatives work hard to cultivate moral virtues based on the three binding foundations: ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity, as well as on the universally employed foundations of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity. The beehive ideal is not a world of maximum freedom, it is a world of order and tradition in which people are united by a shared moral code that is effectively enforced, which enables people to trust each other to play their interdependent roles. It is a world of very high social capital and low anomie ["lack of the usual social or ethical standards"].

It might seem obvious to you that contractual societies are good, modern, creative and free, whereas beehive societies reek of feudalism, fascism, and patriarchy. And, as a

secular liberal I agree that contractual societies such as those of Western Europe offer the best hope for living peacefully together in our increasingly diverse modern nations (although it remains to be seen if Europe can solve its current diversity problems).

I just want to make one point, however, that should give contractualists pause: surveys have long shown that religious believers in the United States are happier, healthier, longer-lived, and more generous to charity and to each other than are secular people. Most of these effects have been documented in Europe too. If you believe that morality is about happiness and suffering, then I think you are obligated to take a close look at the way religious people actually live and ask what they are doing right...

Religious believers give more money than secular folk to secular charities, and to their neighbors. They give more of their time, too, and of their blood. Even if you excuse secular liberals from charity because they vote for government welfare programs, it is awfully hard to explain why secular liberals give so little blood. The bottom line, Brooks concludes [Arthur Brooks, in *Who Really Cares*] is that all forms of giving go together, and all are greatly increased by religious participation and slightly increased by conservative ideology (after controlling for religiosity).

These data are complex and perhaps they can be spun the other way, but at the moment it appears that Dennett [Daniel Dennett in *Breaking the Spell*] is wrong in his reading of the literature. Atheists may have many other virtues, but on one of the least controversial and most objective measures of moral behavior – giving time, money, and blood to help strangers in need – religious people appear to be morally superior to secular folk.

My conclusion is *not* that secular liberal societies should be made more religious and conservative in a utilitarian bid to increase happiness, charity, longevity, and social capital. Too many valuable rights would be at risk, too many people would be excluded, and societies are so complex that it's impossible to do such social engineering and get only what you bargained for. My point is just that every longstanding ideology and way of life contains some wisdom, some insights into ways of suppressing selfishness, enhancing cooperation, and ultimately enhancing human flourishing.

But because of the four principles of moral psychology it is extremely difficult for people, even scientists, to find that wisdom once hostilities erupt. A militant form of atheism that claims the backing of science and encourages “Brights” to take up arms may perhaps advance atheism. But it may also backfire, polluting the scientific study of religion with moralistic dogma and damaging the prestige of science in the process.

My immediate response is: **Talk about** “moralistic dogma and damaging the prestige of science”!

Now, Dear, to understand what I mean by that response (or that “snide remark”), you’d need to do substantial digging to try to understand the data, to develop testable hypotheses, and then collect new data to test the predictions of each hypothesis. I haven’t done that (and of course don’t intend to), but should the matter interest you, you might want to start by digging into at least the following areas.

- Establishing a “beehive” society is undoubtedly an effective way to build and maintain a beehive (or Egyptian or Mesoamerican pyramids, armaments for The Third Reich, or the bureaucracy of any communist society), but does it promote happiness? If it did, then why, for example, do women in Utah (“The Beehive State”) have the highest per capita consumption of antidepressants in the world?!⁸
- Whereas happiness is an emotion “informing us” that we *think* that we’re making progress toward our goals and hope is an emotion “informing us” that we *can expect* to achieve some want (as I tried to show you in **H1 & H2**), it’s relatively easy to delude ourselves by thinking and expecting that we’re making progress toward an unachievable goal (e.g., eternal life in paradise). Thus, it’s relatively easy to be delusionally happy (e.g., by joining some religion, by taking some antidepressant such as Valium or Prozac, or, so I’m told, by “shooting-up” on heroin).
- Relative to the data showing “[that religious believers in the United States are happier, healthier, longer-lived... than are secular people](#)”, is the term “happier” a euphemism for “delusional” and do the terms “healthier” and “longer-lived” simply reflect coercion of religious adherents to engage in certain life-styles that could equally (or more effectively and at less cost) be promoted by secular institutions, e.g., health clubs?
- Also, consider the data supporting the statement: “[Atheists may have many other virtues, but on one of the least controversial and most objective measures of moral behavior – giving time, money, and blood to help strangers in need – religious people appear to be morally superior to secular folk.](#)” As two of many obvious questions: do the data show that religious people are more cooperative or more coerced (the antithesis of cooperation) and do the data show that religious people are more “moral” (using their brains as best they can) or more “immoral” (following orders, like sheep and like “good-little Nazis”)?

In response to Haidt’s essay (quoted above), other authors have raised additional objections, such as the following.⁹

⁸ See the report by the “lifelong member of the LDS church”, Kent Ponder, Ph.D., entitled “Mormon Women, Prozac™ and Therapy” at <http://home.teleport.com/%7Epackham/prozac.htm>.

⁹ See http://edge.org/discourse/moral_religion.html#wilson.

- Michael Shermer points out:

... there is Gregory Paul's 2005 data published in the *Journal of Religion and Society* demonstrating an inverse correlation between religiosity (measured by belief in God, biblical literalism, and frequency of prayer and service attendance) and societal health (measured by rates of homicide, suicide, childhood mortality, life expectancy, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, and teen pregnancy) in 18 developed democracies, where the US scores the highest in religiosity and the highest (by far) in homicides, STDs, abortions, and teen pregnancies.

- The criticism by PZ (Paul Z) Myers (a biology professor at the University of Minnesota) is more forceful and, in my opinion, is masterful:

One deep flaw in his [Haidt's] argument is an implicit shift in the target. He makes a good general definition of moral systems; religion is simply assumed to be a moral system; Dawkins and Harris criticize religion strongly; now, suddenly, Haidt starts treating the New Atheist arguments as an assault on moral systems. This is simply wrong. I'm all for moral systems, and I suspect both Dawkins and Harris would agree that a *good* moral system, especially as defined by Haidt, is essential. The argument is much narrower. Is religion a good moral system? (Our answer is no.) Are there significant aspects of religion that do not represent a moral system at all, and actually make social life more difficult? (Yes.) And can we erect a better moral system that is stripped of the supernatural and much of the pathological baggage that afflicts religion? (Yes, optimistically, but the implementation remains to be done.)

Haidt doesn't even seem to recognize the possibility of these questions, let alone try to argue for different answers. He seems to have made them vanish, reducing them to tautologies, by equating religion with moral systems. This section reads like an unconscious echo of the tired canard that atheists are amoral – it lacks any appreciation of the fact that these New Atheists are all espousing moral behavior in a framework that simply rejects the false virtues of faith. This is especially odd since Haidt is also an atheist; it must be just the New Atheists who are the immoral ones...

Here's the argument: Haidt says that "surveys have long shown that religious believers in the United States are happier, healthier, longer-lived, and more generous to charity and to each other than are secular people," and then makes the case that we ought not to dismiss religion – it might well have something useful to tell us.

I've heard that same story often, and it does not convince. Note that the US is currently suffering the social and international consequences of its recent domination by the religious right, and that atheists are, if not an actively oppressed minority, a minority that is urged to be silent. I would be absolutely gobsmacked if surveys showed that we were *happier* than Christians about this state of affairs.

We also tend to be more isolated – how often have you heard the phrase, “I thought I was the only atheist around here!” – and we know that community is important to human health. There is no reason to assume that religion itself enhances health, or that atheism itself is a detriment: the difference lies in the minority status of one versus the other.

Similarly, atheists may not give as much for a very good reason divorced from the essence of their lack of religious beliefs: who are they going to give to? I am surrounded by requests for charity, and most of them are for religious organizations that I do not trust. There is a great deal of charitable giving that is assessed in these surveys as a moral virtue, but that I consider a moral detriment: why should I contribute to the construction of church buildings, the employment of priests, or the sending of missionaries to Africa? I question whether we should consider those charities at all; rather, they seem to be self-serving propaganda and oppression efforts.

These surveys that Haidt believes are evidence of a virtue in religion actually have a different meaning. They state that *scattered individuals who are excluded from communities do not receive the benefits of community, nor do they feel willing to contribute to the communities that exclude them*. It is *community* that benefits people, not religion. Unfortunately, in this same essay, Haidt apparently deplores the efforts by Dawkins to engage in consciousness raising and the building of a community of atheists, precisely the thing that I suspect would reveal the hollowness of those surveys and would give the godless those benefits of which we are mostly currently deprived.

Strangely, Haidt wants to claim that the New Atheists have been trying to close their eyes and deny the results of surveys that show the religious as happier and healthier. Note that I do not. I think the results of those surveys are weak and biased, and tend to be over-interpreted to favor the virtues of religion, but I’ll readily concede that yes, the Christian majority in America tends to be happy with its dominance and that they do have institutions to care for their own. I will also point out that Dawkins concedes this point as well, and adds an important caveat: “I wish it were not necessary to add that such beneficial effects in no way boost the truth value of religion’s claims.” And there we have a critical point, one that Dr Haidt overlooks entirely.

This is not an argument about whether the faithful are happier, or longer-lived, or more moral (I should point out, too, that Haidt’s own definition of moral systems that I liked so much does not include happiness or longevity in its terms). It’s about the truth of their claims. It’s about whether we should trust social institutions that are both founded on falsehood and lack mechanisms for correcting error...

There is more to our lives than the raw quantity of it, and bliss isn’t the ultimate goal of our existence – I think even the American religious who are the subject of those surveys might be a little aghast at the idea that the purpose of their belief was to help them cling to a life of hedonism for as long as possible. I would sacrifice a little happiness to know the truth, and I would find no consolation in a lie, no matter how

cheerful that lie might be. I'm sure there was a time when I was extremely happy about Santa Claus, but that was long ago, and I have no desire to return to that state of blissful ignorance. *I grew up*. Most of us do.

Haidt closes his essay with another trite accusation. The New Atheists might help advance the cause of atheism, but it muddles up science with “moralistic dogma” and damages the “prestige of science” – we're *hurting the cause*, that tiresome old whine. Oh, please, do buck up. The New Atheism isn't about throwing away moral systems or introducing a new dogma, it's about opening up a protected realm to inquiry and sweeping away old cobwebs, refusing to allow people to hide absurd ideas from criticism behind the foolish plea of faith. It's much more compatible with the spirit of science to question the follies of the priests than to argue that because priests hand out charity, we should overlook the fact that they also claim that gods speak to them and tell them who is naughty and who is nice, and that the good boys and girls will receive magical rewards.

I entirely agree with Haidt that many religious people are good people, that religion has incorporated moral systems that contribute to people's well-being, and that there are kernels of wisdom in religious thought. Where I disagree is that I see the superstition and dogma and error of religion as separable from those desirable elements – that religion is not synonymous with morality and is actually an unfortunate excrescence of the human condition that does not have to be and should not be respected.

- And as per usual, Sam Harris hits the nail on the head:

The point is that religion remains the only mode of discourse that encourages grown men and women to pretend to know things they manifestly do not (and cannot) know. If ever there were an attitude at odds with science, this is it. And the faithful are encouraged to keep shouldering this unwieldy burden of falsehood and self-deception by everyone they meet – by their coreligionists, of course, and by people of differing faith, and now, with startling frequency, by scientists who claim to have *no* faith. Even if Haidt's reading of the literature on morality were correct, and all this manufactured bewilderment proves to be useful in getting certain people to donate time, money, and blood to their neighbors – so what? Is science now in the business of nurturing useful delusions? Surely we can grow in altruism, and refine our ethical intuitions, and even explore the furthest reaches of human happiness, without lying to ourselves about the nature of the universe. It is time that atheist scientists, above all people on this infatuated planet, acted as if this were so.

Sorry to quote so much, Dear, but believe it or not, I do have a purpose. Specifically, in an attempt to justify my indictment (that theists corrupt public discourse and cooperative activities, undermining democracy), I thought it necessary to clarify the critical distinction between “cooperation” and “coerced coordination”, because the essence of any democracy (any

society in which the people rule) is cooperation among free individuals, whereas the essence of any totalitarian system is, in contrast, the people's coerced coordination.

Theistic Coercion Relies on Mental Abuse of Children

As I tried to show you before, theistic coercion is accomplished by indoctrinating children in religious balderdash. I expect that you're tired of my making that claim, but in my opinion, religious brainwashing of children is not only the root of the social evils caused by religions, it should be classified as a serious crime. Theists indoctrinate their children with the same mental pollution in which their own parents poisoned their own minds, and thereby, a steady stream of theists (aka unscientific antihumans) continues to corrupt public discourse, cooperation, and democracies. It's mental abuse of children and, someday, surely it'll be labeled "criminal".

In an earlier X-chapter, I've already commented on emotional, physical, and sexual abuses of children. Yet, as you can find by searching the internet, trying to identify a correlation between such abuses and some degree of religiosity is difficult, not only because of lack of appropriate stratification of the data but also because other variables enter. For example, although data clearly show that child abuse is negatively correlated with family income, yet in turn, less family income is positively correlated with less education – which in turn is positively correlated with increasing religiosity. As a result, it's not clear if it's increasing religiosity (or "just" general ignorance) that increases emotional, physical, and sexual child abuse. On the other hand, mental abuse of children by theists is obvious and rampant.

To try to stimulate you to think more about the mental abuse of children by theists, consider the following set of "cute little [American] stories" entitled "Kids in Church", stories that give religious people "warm feelings".¹⁰

Jesus' Dad's Name

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?"

One child answered, "Mary."

The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?"

A little kid said, "Verge."

Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?"

The kid said, "Well, you know they are always talking about Verge n' Mary."

¹⁰ Copied from <http://varietyreading.carlsguides.com/forwards/kidsinchurch.html>.

3-year-old, Reese: “Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen.”

A little boy was overheard praying: “Lord, if you can’t make me a better boy, don’t worry about it. I’m having a real good time like I am.”

A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, “Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbor’s wife.”

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, “That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys.”

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord’s Prayer for several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the end of the prayer: “Lead us not into temptation,” she prayed, “but deliver us some E-mail.

One particular four-year-old prayed, “And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets.”

A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to church service, “And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?” One bright little girl replied, “Because people are sleeping.”

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. “You’re not supposed to talk out loud in church.” “Why? Who’s going to stop me?” Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, “See those two men standing by the door? They’re hushers.”

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5 and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait’.” Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, “Ryan, you be Jesus!”

A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. “Daddy, what happened to him?” the son asked. “He died and went to Heaven,” the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, “Did God throw him back down?”

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, “Would you like to say the blessing?” “I wouldn’t know what to say,” the girl replied. “Just say what you hear Mommy say,” the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, “Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?”

Really, Dear: are the above “cute” little stories? Or are they horror stories?! Pity the poor kids (such as my own grandchildren) who have been indoctrinated in their parent’s religious junk. As Arthur C. Clarke said:

I would defend the liberty of consenting adult[s]... to practice whatever intellectual perversions they like in the privacy of their own homes; but it is also necessary to protect the young and innocent.

Religious parents (be they Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Mormon, whatever) indoctrinate their children in the most outlandish ideas [viz., according to my dictionary, “queer, far out, quirky, zany, eccentric, (idiotic)... bizarre, unusual, singular, extraordinary, strange, unfamiliar, peculiar, odd, curious... offbeat, off the wall, way-out, wacky, freaky, kooky, kinky, oddball, in left field”), ideas that don’t have a crumb of data to support them. And then, the parents punish their children if they reject their indoctrination, as a minimum, by withdrawing approval – and in many cases, much worse, such as now in Islam and previously in Mormonism, Christianity, and Judaism, namely, death!

Meanwhile, in case the crazy theists haven’t heard:

- Cows aren’t holy and reincarnation doesn’t occur,
- Moses didn’t get any commandments from God and neither of them parted the Red Sea,
- The Virgin Mary wasn’t a virgin and Jesus wasn’t God’s son,
- Muhammad didn’t receive any communications from the angel Gabriel and didn’t go to Paradise, and
- Joseph Smith, Jr. didn’t receive any communications from any angel (or any god) and American Natives aren’t the lost tribes of Israel!

How could parents be so dumb?! How can they be so cruel?

And of course the answer is obvious: they “think” that they’re being kind to their kids. They were indoctrinated in the same nonsense (“twaddle, bunk, balderdash, poppycock, drivel”) by their own parents – and of course, by the clerics of their culture. But it’s gotta stop!

Somehow, the stranglehold that clerics have on their societies’ throats, maintaining the *status quo* primarily for their own benefit, must be broken. The people need to see their low-level clerics for the mystic, dimwit parasites that they are – and their upper-level clerics for the power-mongers that they are. In brief, it’s all B.S. – concocted by a bunch of parasite clerics to avoid working for a living. As Voltaire said:

The first priest was the first rogue who met the first fool.

People must smarten up! The fundamental problem is their ignorance. As Socrates said: “There is only one good, knowledge [or willingness to learn], and one evil, ignorance [or refusal to learn].” And as I’ve written before, it’s even worse: not just ignorance but arrogant ignorance. Theists “know” the “truth” – though they know neither what ‘knowing’ nor ‘truth’ means!

Theistic Hubris

Further, common to all theists (aka unscientific antihumans) of the Abrahamic religions (i.e., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism...) is the insults they hurl at scientific humanists (aka atheists, nonbelievers, infidels...). It’s the classic example of hubris, described in Wikipedia as follows:¹¹

Hubris consists in doing or saying things that cause shame to the victim, not in order that anything may happen to you, nor because anything has happened to you, but merely for your own gratification. Hubris is not the requital of past injuries; this is revenge. As for the pleasure in hubris, its cause is this: men think that by ill-treating others they make their own superiority the greater. Crucial to this definition are the ancient Greek concepts of honor and shame. In Aristotle’s view, a hubristic act is one that inflicts undeserved shame on the victim for the gratification of the perpetrator.

As H.L. Mencken summarized so well:

God is the immemorial refuge of the incompetent, the helpless, the miserable. They find not only sanctuary in His arms, but also a kind of superiority, soothing to their macerated egos; He will set them above their betters.

¹¹ At <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubris>.

And to reach their state of hubris, theists rely on the horribly rampant and stupid “proof by pleasure principle”: as they greedily grasp for what they haven’t earned, their principle is: if it feels good, then it must be true. By that same “reasoning”, other deluded fools have another shot of heroin.

EXCLUDING THEISTS FROM COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

To try to end such ignorance, I now want to turn to describing the fourth step in my proposed four-part strategy (besides ridiculing theists, showing them what they’re doing wrong, and setting a better example), namely, to exclude them from cooperative activities. Yet, before trying to illustrate what I mean by these “exclusionary policies”, I want to remind you about some general features of cooperatives, listed below.

- A “healthy society” can be defined as one with “synergy” (the sum greater than the parts) between individualism and collectivism. For example, the development of the internet has required the brilliance and perseverance of individual scientists and engineers, but the internet wouldn’t be the tremendous resource that it is without the astounding cooperation that has resulted in so many interconnected computers.
- A “healthy balance” between individualism and collectivism has been the hallmark of humanity for at least the past 10,000 years: individuals seeking their own trio of survival goals (of themselves, their families, and their values) have found it to be advantageous to cooperate with other individuals, on tasks from hunting to helping with child rearing and from protecting against invaders to creating the internet.
- Even our bodies (and the bodies of all plants and animals) are amazing examples of cooperation (within each cell, among cells, among organs), and as I reviewed in earlier chapters, “evolution’s arrow” has always been pointing toward cooperation at ever-increasing spatial scales, now developing into cooperation among humans at the global scale. Simultaneously, however, such cooperation is to be sought with protection of rights, responsibilities, and productivities of every individual: if cooperation isn’t voluntary (i.e., if it’s coerced collectivism), then it’s a form of slavery.

- A huge number of illustrations are available of the perpetual strife of finding a “healthy balance” between collectivism and individualism. Examples include some of the differences between men and women (with women seeming to be generally more cooperative than men), of course the strife between communism and capitalism (with capitalism’s emphasis on individualism and free associations of free individuals), and even during the foundation of this country (with Jefferson and Madison emphasizing individualism and State’s rights while Hamilton saw that cooperation among the states and a strong central government were essential for the Union’s survival).
- The clerical “designs” of Abrahamic religions in general (and Islam in particular) seriously erred in the direction of collectivism over individualism, resulting in de-emphasis of the role of women to the point of devaluing and discriminating against them, an over-emphasis on cooperation among men to the extreme of supporting subservience to clerical, tribal, and tyrannical rulers, and a pervasive and horrible “us vs. them mentality”, which led to innumerable atrocities including wars.

Now, in my proposal to “exclude them” (i.e., to exclude unscientific antihumans from existing and experimental cooperatives), of course I realize that I’m proposing more of the “us vs. them mentality”, but as I’ve emphasized before and I’ll reemphasize later, my recommendation is subject to the constraint of nonviolence (except in self defense).

Examples of Recommended Exclusions

Subject to the constraint of nonviolence, I then encourage that scientific humanists take steps to exclude theists from cooperatives in ways such as the following.

- *Don’t date them and certainly don’t marry them.* As I mentioned before, I basically never knew my father (your great grandfather), but the one piece of advice he did give me was sound: “Don’t marry a religious woman; the competition’s too tough.” For women, similar advice might be: “Don’t marry a religious man; he’ll claim God’s on his side.” The point, Dear, is that if you do decide to marry, then you’ll be choosing to enter the most difficult and probably the most important “cooperative” of your life – and perhaps nothing could be more damaging to cooperation between two people than the involvement of a biased, secret, “third party”: in all the inevitable arguments, it’ll be two against one.

* Go to other chapters via

- *Don't engage in contracts with them.* This is an extension of the advice not to enter into a “marriage contract” with them. The point is: in dealing with unscientific antihumans, one is dealing with people who have “hidden agendas”; they have a “higher calling”; therefore, you can't trust them. Examples range “all over the map”, from the wife who learns later that her husband's prime goal is adhere to the Bible's command “**go forth and multiply**”, to the diplomat who later learns that the Quran states that an agreement with Muslims is not binding on them unless it's signed in a mosque – and “unbelievers” (in Islamic balderdash) aren't allowed in mosques!
- *Don't cater to their businesses.* A case in point is my (former) dentist. All was going normally for years; then he “got religion” and replaced all the news magazines in his waiting room with “spiritual literature”. I guess he thought he had a captive audience, but immediately, at least one escaped. I similarly avoid buying pizzas from Dominos Pizza (every pizza purchased provides more money for its founder, Tom Monaghan, to promote rabid Catholicism), staying in any Marriott hotel (since that hotel chain pollutes its rooms with the Book of Mormon), and would encourage all secular humanists to avoid staying in hotels that leave in their rooms pornographic material (such as the *Hustler* magazine), racist material (such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf*), material that advocates slavery (such as some KKK brochure), or material that advocates all those evils plus violence, misogyny, bigotry, intolerance, and so on (such as the Gideon Bible). It's true that we Humanists represent less than 20% of Americans, but by catering only to those businesses that aren't in the business of promoting God, then maybe the unscientific antihumans who use their businesses to proselytize will eventually get the message.¹²
- *Oppose their involvements in educational and scientific organizations.* In whatever way that's legal (including attempting to change the laws), attempts should be made to block unscientific antihumans from gaining influential positions in schools, universities, and scientific organizations (such as the National Academy of Science). For example, to permit “creationists” (or “Intelligent Designers”) to teach science in our schools

¹² For example, <http://www.christiandirectory.info/> proudly lists 3744 such businesses in the U.S – and “the directory is being constantly updated to include as many Christian sites as possible. Now you can shop at specific sites designated as Christian websites” – or avoid them!

(even if they agree to abide by laws prohibiting the teaching of such nonsense) is asking for “double-trouble”: on the one hand, their own “beliefs” demonstrate that they don’t understand science, and on the other hand, the opportunity for them to poison children’s minds with snide remarks is too dangerous – it’s like having pedophiles teach classes in sex education. And the dangers are not just in science: unscientific antihumans can easily pollute children’s minds in classes ranging from English literature to home economics and from history to sociology. But to permit unscientific antihumans to hold influential positions in scientific societies and organizations (such as various National Academies) is unconscionable. As George Vetter wrote in his book *Magic and Religion* (1973):

Supernaturalism is, in its social functions and consequences, a dangerous opiate. And, what is perhaps even worse, it discourages objective attempts at intelligent social trial-and-error, planning, and even research, and undermines man’s faith in his own resources.

- *Oppose their involvements in any branch of any government.* Think of it, Dear: Do you want people in the judiciary (such as Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia) who make significant, life-changing decisions in the total absence of even a shred of evidence? Do you want legislators who “think” that laws are dictated by some magic man in the sky? Do you want administrators who choose policies whispered into their ears (or whatever) by an invisible, imaginary friend? If anyone running for any office claims that they “put their faith in the Lord”, then put none of your faith in that person: vote for another candidate! Surely someday, soon, any candidate for any political office would be committing “political suicide” by admitting that he or she gains comfort and support by talking to some invisible friend, aka God.
- *Oppose encroachments of Muslims in Western societies.* I’m sorry to single out the Muslims, Dear, but they’ve brought it on themselves: they’re not just “your run-of-the-mill” childish theists (i.e., unscientific antihumans): as I’ve described in earlier chapters, Islam isn’t just a religion, is an all-encompassing ideology; far too many of them want everyone to be a Muslim and want Islamic law (aka *Sharia*) to apply throughout the world; therefore, if they don’t accept separation of religion from politics, if they don’t agree with the fundamental Western principle of secular governments, then they should be expelled (and exiled) from Western nations.

And since I expect that the set of problems caused by Muslims in the West will be one of the most difficult that your generation will need to solve, Dear, I should probably add some additional comments. The case of excluding Muslims from cooperative activities, however, is too large a topic for me to try to describe in this chapter; instead, I'll emphasize it in the next two chapters.

Nonetheless, here let me just introduce the topic with the following article entitled "Saudi Arabia and the Islamintern" by Hugh Fitzgerald posted on 20 May 2008 at Jihad Watch.¹³

In 70 years, from roughly 1918 to 1988, with its Comintern, and Willi Munzenberg, and subventions to "The Morning Star" and "L'Humanite" and "L'Unita," and to such people as Gus Hall, and to pay for all those Peace and Youth Conferences – in Helsinki, for example, with its trademark Dove of Peace by Picasso – and with all the magazines about the wonders of the Soviet Union and the Building of Communism, and pull-the-wool-over-the-eyes trips for journalists, and all kinds of other propaganda designed to fool or inveigle the West, the Soviet Union spent between eight and nine billion dollars.

The total amount spent by just one Muslim country (admittedly the richest), Saudi Arabia, in furthering the cause of Islam over the past three decades, is close to 100 billion dollars. Think of all the mosques built and maintained, all the imams [the person who leads prayers in a mosque] on the payroll, all the missionaries conducting *Da'wa* [proselytizing for Islam] in American and British prisons, all the Western hirelings in the capital of every Western country, whose full-time job is to explain away the Al-Saud [the House of Saud] and the *mutawwa* [religious police] of Saudi Arabia, and Islam itself, its texts, its tenets, its attitudes, its atmospherics.

Add in the amounts spent by the Emirates, by Kuwait, by Qatar, by Libya and by Iran, by the O.I.C. [Organization of Islamic Cooperation] itself (funded by the rich Arabs), and the amounts sloshing about the foundations of the Western world, causing the pillars of its stability to crumble, and the promise of ever-more trillions to be accumulated by Saudi Arabia and its Companions For The Promotion Of Islam, and who would not, or should not, be alarmed?

The American government, and other Western governments, should long ago have taken steps to interdict the flow of funds from outside, especially from the Gulf, that flow to the West in order to support Muslim expansion inside the Infidel lands. If local Muslims can raise the funds for their own mosques, that would be one thing. But something else is going on. Foreign funds, every bit as disturbing as the flow of

¹³ Copied from <http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/021101.php#more>.

money from the propaganda units of the Soviet or Nazi regimes, are being used to establish outposts of power deep within what Muslims see as enemy territory, *Dar al-Harb* [“the House of War”], by whatever means are possible and effective.

And *qitaal*, combat, is not possible now, and not effective. But campaigns of *Da’wa*, carefully targeted at economically or psychically marginal or determinedly alienated groups and individuals, make use of this Saudi and other Muslim oil-state wealth, to pay for these propaganda campaigns, and to build, everywhere they can, vast edifices, mosques with, ideally, those bristling and aggressive minarets, designed to overawe those in the surrounding communities – and the communities chosen are often those peopled by the economically marginal, who are deemed ripe for conversion, or “reversion.” When one sees a mosque go up in a poor town, a mosque that costs fifteen or twenty million dollars, and discovers that there are no more than a hundred Muslims in that town, and at the same time, with thousands of congregants, churches are closing for want of funds, one understands that it is not those local Muslims paying for that mosque. Something else, something disturbing and sinister, is going on.

See, for example, the whole saga of the Boston Mosque, deliberately built in Roxbury, where it is hoped that the circumambient black Muslim population will grow, and where, all along, Saudi money, and a Muslim deep within city government, but promoting Saudi and larger Muslim interests, together managed to produce this mosque that will unsettle the old-line appeal of the black Christian churches, and is meant to do so.

It should not be beyond the wit of the American government to find ways to halt this flow of foreign Muslim money, either by seizure as money that is being used for purposes that naturally tend to increase the threat to national security, or by demanding of the Saudis that they stop that flow – on pain of having all kinds of things happen, beginning of course with exposure and Congressional hearings about this Saudi money, and what it buys, and about all the Western hirelings who, over the years, have done the Saudi bidding.

The American public needs to become aware of how the Saudi lobby has prevented not only an intelligent understanding of what Islam is all about, but – far more important to many – has prevented a sensible energy policy from being put in place thirty years ago, with a steadily-rising gasoline tax, and all sorts of other measures (subsidies to trains and other forms of mass transit, subsidies to solar and wind energy, a campaign to make clear how important – even indispensable – nuclear power is, and the building, by the government, of nuclear reactors on the French model and at the French rate). Then there will be, as there should be, palpable rage at the Al-Saud, and at meretricious [“apparently attractive but having no integrity”] Saudi Arabia, which has never been our ally, even when, temporarily, our interests (say, in Afghanistan with the Soviet army) may have temporarily overlapped, but rather has always and forever been our mortal enemy.

Deciding on the Extent of Exclusionary Policies

As for how far to go with policies that exclude theists, Dear, it depends. In the next chapter, I'll try to explain what I mean by that dangling statement ("it depends") – because it depends on so many factors! It depends if we're dealing with "run-of-the-mill" average theists who are "kinda dumb" but "trying to be nice" (most modern-day Christians), if we're dealing with some "rabid fundamentalists" (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and maybe even Mormon) who are "hell-bent" (a very apt expression) on running (and ruining) other people's lives, or if we're dealing with a well-financed supremacist scheme to destroy the West (such as is being funded especially by Saudi Arabia, as described in the article by Fitzgerald, quoted above).

Very fortunately for you (and all of humanity), however, there's a way to make decisions even in those complicated cases where "it depends", namely, use your head! To illustrate what I mean, Dear, please slowly and carefully read the following satire of the way theists exclude atheists in America. It was recently posted on the internet by Robby Berry.¹⁴ From it, I hope that you'll come to the important conclusion: "Hmmm. Yah, it does depend on quite a bit, doesn't it?"

Life in Our Anti-Christian America

Robby Berry

Prologue

During a recent exchange of flames and frivolity on a local Usenet group... a newsgroup available only to students of Ohio State University, somebody made the observation that America was an "anti-Christian" society. As an atheist, I am well aware of the extent to which religion, especially Christianity, permeates our society. As a result, I found this claim difficult to believe. As I was in a playful mood at the time, I decided to debunk his claim in a somewhat roundabout manner.

The response to the article was fairly good, and one person asked me to repost it to alt.atheism, which I did. Response there was even better, and one person even sent me some additional items to add to the list. I then decided to make this a "collaborative rant" by taking suggestions for items to add to the list. Eventually, I had to turn the list over to somebody else, due to the lack of spare time brought about by the birth of my son Jonathan. The list was maintained by Jeffery Jay Lowder for a while, but he too is now suffering from a lack of spare time. New items for the list are no longer being accepted.

¹⁴ Copied from http://www.infidels.org/misc/humor_archive/lioaca.html. Copyright © Internet Infidels 1995-2007.

I'm certainly glad this has finally been brought out into the open. The anti-Christian bias in our society has reached absurd proportions. Consider:

1. During the 1988 election campaign, George Bush said that Christians should not be considered patriots or real American citizens.
2. Bill Clinton steadfastly refuses to give any speeches at local churches.
3. Both major political parties are dominated by anti-Christians. The Republican party, for example, gave us such hardcore atheists as Pat Buchanan, Dan Quayle, Phyllis Schlafly and Ronald Reagan. And the Democrats have given us such personalities as the Rev. Martin Luther King and the Rev. Jesse Jackson both noted for their vicious attacks on all forms of Christianity.
4. Let's talk about the media. On Sunday mornings, nearly all major television channels broadcast pro-atheist shows; it is nearly impossible to find religious programming during that time period. Further, Madalyn Murray O'Hair has her own cable TV channel, while Pat Robertson has been unable to obtain one for himself.
5. Most major newspapers run a special weekly section devoted to Atheism. There are no equivalent sections for religious news.
6. Anti-Christian shows such as the American Atheist Forum are broadcast by major national networks. Meanwhile, Billy Graham is only able to get on the air through public access TV, which is watched by few people.
7. On news programs and "reality" TV shows such as Rescue 911, nobody is ever shown giving thanks to God after surviving a disaster.
8. It is almost impossible to find a shopping mall with a Christian Armory bookstore, while Atheist Book Centers are featured prominently on every corner.
9. While atheist couples who marry rarely have any difficulty finding a place to do so, it is nearly impossible for Christian couples to find a church where they can marry.
10. For that matter, churches themselves are extremely rare, while atheist meeting centers can be found every few blocks.
11. Recently, several atheists have shot and killed Christian priests as they were going to work in their churches. Similarly, atheists are well known for blockading churches on Sunday mornings.
12. Nearly all of our elected public officials are atheists; they even have to swear on a copy of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in order to take office.
13. In a similar vein, jurors must take an oath upon a copy of the *Skeptical Inquirer* before they can serve. There have even been court cases thrown out because one of the jury members was a Christian who insisted on swearing on a Bible.
14. And of course, people are free to wear pentagram jewelry, but those trying to wear cross-shaped earrings or pendants to work will be politely told to remove the jewelry or lose their job.
15. Speaking of the workplace, Christians often find it nearly impossible to get time off work for religious holidays such as Christmas.

16. Even our language reflects the radical anti-Christian bias that pervades our society. For example, when somebody sneezes, most people say “Darwin bless you.” Similarly, “Voltaire dammit!” is a common cussword.
17. All of our money has the atheistic slogan “We do not trust in God” printed on it. (Contributed by Mike Hurben, <hurben@lamar.ColoState.EDU>.)
18. In school, our children are made to recite the pledge, “One nation, anti-God, indivisible....” (Contributed by Mike Hurben.)
19. One cannot rent a hotel room without finding a copy of Nietzsche’s *The Anti-Christ* in the room. (Contributed by Mike Hurben.)
20. Organizations such as the Boy Scouts deny membership to Christians. (Contributed by Mike Hurben.)
21. In the military, it is nearly impossible to obtain Conscientious Objector status for religious reasons, even though those with philosophical reasons can obtain C.O. status relatively easily. (Contributed anonymously.)
22. Christian churches are forced to pay exorbitant taxes. (Contributed by Rick Gillespie, <rwg@abbyroad.fc.hp.com>.)
23. You can’t drive anywhere without seeing a Darwin fish or a “Jesus Was A Fraud” bumper sticker stuck to a car. (Contributed by Rick Gillespie.)
24. Georgia recently passed a new law requiring schools to have a “moment of noise” during which children are encouraged to degrade Christianity. (Contributed by Rick Gillespie.)
25. College campuses usually have dozens of atheist organizations, but few if any for Christians. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom, <maanstro@iastate.edu>.)
26. There are several well-known atheist campus preachers who lecture on college campuses on the virtues of Atheism. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom.)
27. Also common on college campuses are groups of students handing out copies of Bertrand Russell’s *Why I Am Not A Christian*; some even force people who don’t want these books to take them. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom.)
28. Campus newspapers often print editorials extolling the virtues of Atheism. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom.)
29. People look at you funny and wonder if there’s something wrong upstairs if you admit to being a Christian in public. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom.)
30. Many Christians are afraid to admit their Christianity to their parents and friends, for fear their kin will consider them immoral Christian scum and want nothing to do with them. (Contributed by Mark Anstrom.)
31. At presidential inauguration ceremonies, Madalyn Murray-O’Hair (that well-known friend of several presidents) gives a short pro-Atheism speech. (Contributed by Matt Barry, <mbarry@u.washington.edu>.)
32. For decades, high school and college commencement ceremonies have included brief speeches at the beginning and end of the ceremony in which Atheism is praised and Christians deemed irrational. Christians who object to the practice, or who ask for an opening prayer instead, are regarded as cranks at best and subversives at worst. (Contributed by Matt Barry.)
33. Not only do commencement ceremonies feature pro-atheist speeches, there’s usually an entire two-hour ceremony the day before graduation dedicated to

- upholding the atheist foundation of our educational system. (Contributed by Jed Hartman, <logos@cathay.esd.sgi.com>.)
34. “There are no Christians in foxholes” is a popular slogan in our society.
 35. Most hospitals are full of atheist symbols, and many prominently feature statues of Nietzsche, Darwin, and so forth. (Contributed by Bill Pursell, <pursell@mathfs.math.montana.edu>.)
 36. Communities set up atheist brainwashing facilities, and apply social pressure to citizens to report to these facilities every Sunday morning. Furthermore, attendees are expected to contribute money to support these facilities, and to build others through “outreach” programs. (Contributed by “me,” <silly@blend.ugcs.caltech.edu>.)
 37. Most parents in America indoctrinate their children at an early age to be atheists by forcing them to attend these brainwashing sessions, whether they want to or not. (Contributed by “me.”)
 38. While atheists hold huge rallies in 25,000-seat amphitheaters, Christians are so few in number that they can only dream of holding such rallies. (Contributed by Payton Chung, <pchung@unity.ncsu.edu>.)
 39. At baseball games, you can often spot people carrying signs that read “*Origin Of Species*, page 34.”
 40. Hospital waiting rooms usually come equipped with children’s copies of Stephen Hawking’s *A Brief History Of Time*, complete with order forms so that parents can send off for their own copy. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 41. Atheist magazines such as *Atheism Today*, *Today’s Atheist Woman*, *Atheist Homeschooler*, *The Atheist Century*, *Atheist Ministry*, *The Atheist Archeological Review*, *Atheist Parenting Today* and *The Atheist Science Monitor* are featured prominently in newsstands across the country. (Contributed by Payton Chung. Additional magazine names contributed by Dave Chapman, <chapman@ims.com>.)
 42. The Fellowship of Atheist Athletes has local chapters on college campuses throughout America. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 43. According to recent Gallup polls, approximately 86% of Americans do not believe in God. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 44. Politicians often refer to America’s “Agnosto-Atheist heritage” when trying to woo voters. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 45. Atheists are beginning to subvert the American political process. For example, the American Atheists recently published over thirty million voter’s guides for distribution at atheist meeting-houses. These guides gave specific instructions not to vote for those who oppose atheist values. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 46. It’s easy to buy checks with quotes from Thomas Paine, but almost impossible to buy checks with Bible verses on them. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
 47. Businesses often refuse to admit that they are Christian-owned and operated, for fear of being boycotted by their atheist customers. Meanwhile, atheist-owned businesses often feature Darwin-fish logos in their ads. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)

48. There are large networks of atheistic private schools in America, while it's nearly impossible to find a private Catholic school. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
49. It's difficult to find people with good Christian names like John or Paul or Christopher. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
50. Most gravestones in America are engraved with pentagrams; those few graves which are engraved with crosses usually end up being vandalized. (Contributed by Payton Chung.)
51. Atheists have often invented "deathbed deconversion" stories about famous Christians, claiming they became atheists just before they died.
52. Around the time of Darwin's birthday, Christians have to put up with songs about Darwin, which are played in shopping malls, restaurants, and even public restrooms. (Contributed by Dave Chapman, <chapman@ims.com>.)
53. We number our calendar years according to the number of years that have passed since Darwin's birthday. (Hence the term "A.D.", "After Darwin.") (Contributed by Jeff Lowder, <jlowder@infidels.org>.)
54. Christian gatherings and funerals are often disrupted by atheists shouting slurs and holding signs that read, "Nature hates Christians." (Contributed by David Gellman, <dgellman@coho.halcyon.com>.)
55. Books which promote Christianity are often removed from library shelves in response to atheist pressure groups. (Contributed by David Gellman.)
56. A popular bumper sticker reads, "No Jesus, Know Peace. Know Jesus, No Peace." (Contributed by Stephanie Anderson, <ska@gas.uug.arizona.edu>.)
57. Insurance companies refer to natural disasters as "Acts of Darwin." (Contributed by Yellgnats P. Fiddlestein, <dentar@infinet.net>.)
58. Forms for job applications, government aid and so forth often ask what type of atheist you are, with checkboxes for "Atheist," "Agnostic," "Humanist", and so forth. If you are a Christian, the only thing you can do is check the "other" box if one is provided. (Contributed by Yellgnats P. Fiddlestein.)
59. Sports teams often read from the Humanist Manifesto prior to the game, in the hopes that doing so will increase their chances of winning. (Contributed by Yellgnats P. Fiddlestein.)
60. Atheists constantly threaten television and movies producers with boycotts whenever they portray Christianity in a positive light. (Contributed by Yellgnats P. Fiddlestein.)
61. Atheists often hold bonfires at atheist meeting centers, where Christian literature can be thrown into the fire. (Contributed by Yellgnats P. Fiddlestein.)
62. Gambling is freely legalized for secular purposes, yet churches have to have their bingo halls in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, or on Indian reservations. (Contributed by Clive Feckus, <yfcprod@localnet.com>.)
63. Baseball games and the like have "The Star-Spangled Banner" sung by hard-rock groups bellowing out lyrics such as, "Foolish god-crazed slaves (whip crack), At the altar of Rock and Roll you'll kneel!" and the singers will encourage any Christians in the stands to get eaten by lions held ready on the playing field. (Contributed by Tatiana Covington, <tatiana@gas.uug.arizona.edu>.)

64. New military officers are expected to say “God does not exist” at the end of their commissioning oath. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
65. It easy to support atheistic charities like, “Atheist Children’s Fund,” “Agnostics Against AIDS,” etc., but virtually impossible to support important causes through Christian organizations. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
66. Well-known atheists like Michael Martin and Quentin Smith have set up ministries to witness to Christians, but it is virtually impossible to find Christians who specialize in debating atheists. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
67. Congress starts each session with selected excerpts from Michael Martin’s *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*. Each house of Congress also has its own “Atheist Chaplain.” No Christian prayers are ever made in Congress and no Christian chaplains are available. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
68. The word “Christian” is recognized as a term which represents the worst of human attributes: cynicism, pessimism, selfishness, and moral turpitude. The word “atheist,” on the other hand, is used to signify all that is virtuous, as in, “That’s mighty atheist of you!” (Contributed by Chad Docterman, <DOCTERM1@MARSHALL.EDU>.)
69. On sitcoms and movies of the week, the parents make references to how their lack of faith in God helps them get through life’s troubles. Meanwhile, Christians are portrayed as pathetic folks who end up converting to Atheism. (Contributed by Tara Powers, <tap@cs.umb.edu>.)
70. Many American cities are named after noted atheist figures; for example, there is Corpus Darwini, Texas and San Voltaire, California. (Contributed by Scott Bigham, <dsb@cs.duke.edu>.)
71. Historically, most private colleges and universities in the US were founded by atheists; while some have become religious over the years, many of them retain close ties with atheist organizations, and some of them still use hiring practices that exclude Christians from their faculty and staff. (And this discrimination against Christians is permitted and protected by law!) (Contributed by Scott Forschler, <forschler@butler.edu>.)
72. Atheists who convert to Christianity are often told by their parents “It’s just a rebellious phase. Once you move through this stage of life you’ll realize that you never really believed in God.” Similarly, people who are raised as Christians are condescended to, and told that if they would give Atheism a chance, it would fill the empty hole that Christianity must be leaving in their lives. (Contributed by Carla Schack, <cschack@emerald.tufts.edu>.)
73. When celebrities or musicians accept awards during one of the many awards programs, they often end their list of “thank-you’s” with a humble acknowledgment to Darwin for their “evolution-given talents.” (Contributed by John Caballero, <ediblened@mail.utexas.edu>.)
74. During the 1996 election campaign, Pat Buchanan declared that creationism should not be taught in public schools. “We need a president who will commit himself to restoring Secular Humanist values and driving out the false god of the Christians,” he said. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
75. Atheists regularly go door-to-door on Sunday mornings asking people not to go to church with them. (Contributed by CJP.)

76. Atheist cults are masters at luring lonely, young, disenfranchised people into their rational cults to brainwash them with reason so that they will give their lives and all worldly possessions to the atheist leaders. (Contributed by CJP.)
77. Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons, and other Christian groups are banned (by atheist-initiated zoning laws) from passing out literature from door to door. (Contributed by CJP.)
78. People who don't decorate their homes with images of the Sun during the Winter Solstice season, are assumed to be irrational Christians in need of rational therapy and conversion. (Contributed by CJP.)
79. Even atheist businesses hate the Winter Solstice season because people are encouraged to be rational and reasonable, thus encouraging our population to avoid senseless spending and debt and needless possession of material goods. (Contributed by CJP.)
80. In general, Christians are considered to be less-than-honest. If you are a Christian, you must have no reason or rational judgment; therefore, you cannot be trusted to tell the truth. (Contributed by CJP.)
81. Prisoners have become wise to the fact that they may receive early paroles if they claim to have found Atheism and been saved by Darwin. Such a conversion to rationality is thought to be a favorable sign of the rejection of a life of crime. (Contributed by CJP.)
82. Humanist hate group members shave their heads and run around painting red H's on the doors of churches to intimidate Christians. (Contributed by CJP.)
83. The Humanist Left and the Immoral Majority influence voting patterns in the Humanist Manifesto Belt states. (Contributed by CJP.)
84. The government declared an official holiday in November to give thanks to fellow humans for the hard work and labor of our agricultural workers who provide the plentiful food resources we have in the US. (Contributed by CJP.)
85. Atheist leaders of many sects bring in millions of dollars each week from TV and telephone solicitation and weekly meeting collections, enough to support at least one atheist meeting hall in nearly every community in the country, while Christian groups barely have enough money to support a half-dozen national groups. (Contributed by CJP.)
86. Most people assume everyone else is an atheist and are unbelievers as they are. It makes for uncomfortable social situations for Christians and other religious types. (Contributed by CJP.)
87. When one looks up "religion" or "Christianity" in books of collected quotations, 99% of the quotes chosen for publication are negative while atheist or agnostic topics are filled with positive quotations. (Contributed by CJP.)
88. Bookstores have entire sections filled with atheist literature while "spiritual" and "religious" books are almost impossible to find, except through specialized distributors. (Contributed by CJP.)
89. Despite the overwhelming number of atheists in the general population and in powerful legislative positions, when they don't get their own way, atheists whine that this is an anti-atheistic country. (Contributed by CJP.)
90. Atheists constantly cite, out of context, books of philosophy by noted atheists to prove that Christians live irrational lives. (Contributed by CJP.)

91. Atheists do everything possible to get laws passed that will prevent irrational Christians from making their own choices in matters of sex, procreation, lifestyles, family units, etc. (Contributed by CJP.)
92. Until recently, atheists had passed laws (known as Green Laws) that require all businesses to stay open on Sundays, preventing Christians who wished to practice their religious beliefs to work, just like everyone else. (Contributed by CJP.)
93. Sci-fi movies almost always make rational scientific types into “good guys” while emotional, irrational people become the “heavies.” (Contributed by CJP.)
94. Movies that featured myths of silly miracles (like the parting of the Red Sea or the Resurrection of Jesus or other Biblical tales) never made any money. Most big movie studios rejected all proposals to make such ridiculous stories into films. However, “The Humanist Manifesto,” 1956, was one of Cecil B. DeMille’s blockbusters. (Contributed by CJP.)
95. In small towns and communities all over the US, atheist horns awake Christians at midnight on Saturdays preventing them from getting a good night’s sleep before their Sabbath. Fortunately for much of the population, few church bells wake atheists who want to sleep in on Sundays. (Contributed by CJP.)
96. At every banquet, no matter the occasion, an atheist propagandist gets up and thanks Madalyn Murray O’Hair for her wisdom and insight in educating us rational beings so that we can provide the food that we are about to eat. The presence of nonatheists is not even acknowledged. No consideration is given to those who might find such a practice offensive. (Contributed by CJP.)
97. Schools across the country force students to sing songs such as “Jesus Is Not the Son of God” during the Winter Solstice season. They rationalize this infringement on minority rights of religious freedom by claiming the songs are part of our collective culture. (Contributed by CJP.)
98. During the Solstice season, Atheist Army members in uniforms block entrances to stores ringing annoying bells and requesting donations to save nonatheists from their pathetic irrational lives. (Contributed by CJP.)
99. Atheist Army (and other Freethought) soup kitchens force homeless Christians to listen to atheist propaganda before serving them a meal. (Contributed by CJP.)
100. Hundreds of self-help groups replace codependence with the 12 Steps of A.B.A. (Atheist Brainwashing Anonymous), convincing people they don’t have the power to help themselves but must rely on the power of Darwin to overcome addiction. (Contributed by CJP.)
101. US atheist organizations send missionaries to underdeveloped countries to convince people to renounce long-held local religious beliefs and become atheists. (Contributed by CJP.)
102. On Solstice Eve, there is nothing to watch on TV except atheist rituals from Stonehenge. (Contributed by CJP.)
103. During the Solstice Season, nearly every network airs reruns (ad nauseam) of “It’s a Rational Life,” “Reason on 34th Street,” “A Solstice Story,” “The Stupidest Story Ever Told,” and other atheist favorites. Christian programming cannot be found. (Contributed by CJP.)

104. Christian employees have to use personal days or sick leave to stay at home to celebrate their holidays while everyone gets the day off for Winter Solstice and the birthdays of Charles Darwin and Madalyn Murray O’Hair. All major atheist celebrations have been declared National Holidays with all government offices remaining closed on those days. (Contributed by CJP.)
105. All Rational People’s Day, the 1st of November, is a holiday at atheist private schools. It’s a day to celebrate Voltaire, Edison, Russell, Asimov, O’Hair, and other atheist leaders and philosophers for their rational and logical thoughts. (Contributed by CJP.)
106. Ronald Reagan denounced the Vatican as the “Heavenly Empire” because of its official status as a theocracy. (Contributed by CJP.)
107. When someone is pathetic enough to admit to being a Christian, friends respond by saying things like, “No you’re not. You just think you are.” (Contributed by CJP.)
108. Images of Lazarus Long, a fictional character in Robert Heinlein books, are frequently pretended to be seen by atheists in paint stains, in the spots of cows, in tree bark, etc., causing large groups of people to make pilgrimages to those locations to confirm their lack of belief in the supernatural. These stories are given national news coverage to promote the status quo. (Contributed by CJP.)
109. Christians are unfairly scrutinized for wearing T-shirts that say things such as “God’s Gym” or “Resurrection Day,” whereas atheists can proudly and without any protest wear their “Reason’s Beer is Better than Jesus” or Darwin-fish T-shirts. (Contributed by Patty Lathan <pal4885@tamaix.tamu.edu>.)
110. Christians are constantly questioned as to where their morals come from. People always wonder why they have a reason to live, if god is the only thing they live for. Atheists, on the other hand, are praised for their high moral standards, and it is acknowledged that they don’t need a reason to live just “being” is enough. (Contributed by Patty Lathan.)
111. Professors are encouraged to tell the class that they are atheists during the first class period of the semester, since this conveys to the students that they sincerely care about their progress in the class, and about the student as a person. Christian professors would get ostracized for doing this; students would complain and the professor would be told to keep his beliefs to himself. (Contributed by Patty Lathan.)
112. Atheists often try to scare Christians into disbelief by yelling that after they die they will be sent to the earth’s fiery core and tormented by Nietzsche for eternity. (Contributed by Captain Tripps <rexerm@umich.edu>.)
113. Each year, the US Post Office is nearly brought to its knees as both devout and “cultural” atheists celebrate Lucretius’ birth by sending each other antireligious cards and illuminated copies of *De Rerum Natura*. (Contributed by <BPGriffin@aol.com>.)
114. Atheists from Salt Lake City collect lists of dead people, so that they can be baptized posthumously as atheists. (Contributed by Steven Carr <carrs@dial.pipex.com>.)

115. Atheists take sick people to doctors so that they can be ‘cured,’ instead of sitting them in front of TV healing shows. Many of these so-called ‘doctors’ have no ministerial qualifications! (Contributed by Steven Carr.)
116. Atheists have a superstitious dread of the number 13, because Darwin once invited 12 of his friends to supper. In fact, atheists have such a strong superstition about certain numbers that road signs and house numbers and company logos have to be changed to avoid upsetting them. (Contributed by Steven Carr.)
117. NBC has shows that promote reason and skepticism in the face of Biblical prophecy or lone pseudoscientists while shows that promote irrational beliefs are on PBS and never reach as many people. (Contributed by The Mighty Timm <mutjl2@uxa.ecn.bgu.edu>.)
118. Noted atheists own “The Family Channel” and show programming that they find appropriate for other atheists. (Contributed by The Mighty Timm.)
119. The shows “Ignored by an Angel” and “Ultimately Illusory Highway to Heaven” are getting more and more viewers every week. (Contributed by The Mighty Timm.)
120. Each year, the President lights the National Solstice Tree. (Contributed by Brian Helfrich <brianh2@chelsea.ios.com>.)
121. There is an entire genre of music known as “Contemporary Atheist Music.” The notion of “Christian music” is unheard of. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
122. Most radio markets have at least one atheist radio station. There are no Christian radio stations anywhere. (Contributed by Jeff Lowder.)
123. Judges justify abortion based on evolutionary theory and Nietzsche, instead of the Bible. (Contributed by Arturo Magidin <magidin@math.berkeley.edu>.)
124. Judges often give long speeches on atheistic morality and use them as a basis for strange or lenient sentences. (Contributed by Arturo Magidin.)
125. All prisons have a resident atheist philosopher, and inmates are encouraged to participate in weekly philosophical discussions on Bible Contradictions. This is often reported to parole boards, which consider it a good indication of contriteness on the prisoner’s part. (Contributed by Arturo Magidin.)
126. Atheists tend to call homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals criminals against nature while Christians accept them the way God made them. Moreover, while a few “liberal” atheist organizations do not make heterosexuality a requirement for membership, most atheist organizations strictly condemn such behavior and have used their massive political influence to criminalize same-sex marriages. (Contributed by the Mighty Timm and Jeff Lowder.)
127. School children who profess their Christianity are routinely held up to ridicule and harassment by the students and teachers who make up the atheist majority in both public and private schools. (Contributed by George A Ricker <gricker@iu.net>.)
128. Relatively inoffensive movies, which might otherwise be rated G or PG, are likely to be rated PG-13 or R if they contain excessive religious content. (Contributed by Susan Mitchell <susanm@indirect.com>.)

129. According to comedian George Carlin, the “seven holy words” that cannot be broadcast on television are “God,” “Jesus,” “Christ,” “bless,” “heaven,” “salvation,” and “soul.” (Contributed by Susan Mitchell.)
130. Congress has recently passed legislation requiring television manufacturers to install a so-called “H-chip,” which enables viewers to automatically censor out any program containing excessive holiness. (Contributed by Susan Mitchell.)
131. Another bill recently signed by President Clinton includes the notorious “Communications Indecency Act,” which will severely restrict the free speech rights of persons wishing to use Christian or other religious language or images on Usenet, Web pages, or even local bulletin boards. (Contributed by Susan Mitchell.)
132. A political candidate who declares himself a Christian will have far less chance of winning an election than one who flaunts his Atheism. (Contributed by Alex Matulich.)
133. Former president Franklin Roosevelt always reminded his speech writers to put “some of that anti-God stuff” in his speeches.” (Contributed by Gaetan Iavicoli <giav@CAM.ORG>.)
134. Because many forms of Christianity oppose homosexuality, the Atheist Left has installed rules allowing members of the armed services to lose their jobs simply because they have admitted to being heterosexuals. And, of course, heterosexual marriages are completely prohibited. (Contributed by Brett Pasternack <brett@cjbbs.com>.)
135. Every year in November, the President issues a proclamation for a national day of Thanksgiving, calling on Americans to spend the day thanking their parents for creating them and for all that they have done for them. No mention is ever made of the role of God in creating people, helping them achieve happiness, or keeping the country secure. (The proclamation is usually issued a few weeks before the ceremonial planting of the White House Solstice Tree.) (Contributed by Brett Pasternack.)
136. Similarly, after a major disaster the President usually calls for an official day of action; never is prayer suggested. (Contributed by Brett Pasternack.)
137. The President usually ends every speech with the words, “Let’s all help America, since there is no God to do things for us.” (Contributed by Brett Pasternack.)
138. Whenever an atheist commits a crime, invariably people will argue that this is not a sign that teaching Atheism might not guarantee a better society, because anyone who would act that way “isn’t a true atheist.” (Contributed by Brett Pasternack.)
139. Bill Bennett compiles a long list of questionable statistics about increasing social ills in American society, and alleges that the increase is due to the “disastrous social experiment” that has abandoned our Agnosto-Atheistic heritage in favor of Christianity. Likewise, when he publishes a thick, pompous volume of other people’s work entitled “The Book of Reason,” the media (notably Time magazine) swoons in rapture and the book becomes a best seller (but rarely read by the children it’s bought for, as they are not so easily

- indoctrinated as their atheist parents hope). (Contributed by Linus Niksa <lglasttn@aol.com>.)
140. Hordes of angry scientists picketed the movie “Young Einstein,” claiming that it depicted Einstein completely wrong, but no one cared enough to demonstrate against “The Last Temptation of Jesus Christ.” “Young Einstein” is still so controversial that it is difficult to find in the large video chains. (Contributed by Thomas Foote <tfoote@vlsi9.gsfc.nasa.gov>.)
 141. “I don’t need a copilot” is a popular bumper sticker. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 142. Encyclopedia entries on Christianity are usually written by atheists. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 143. Every time a football team wins a game, the coach thanks his players for playing such a spectacular game. Every time a football team loses a game, the coach says, “Well, we would have won, but Jesus wouldn’t let us.” (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 144. Bookstores usually carry twenty or thirty versions of the Humanist Manifesto: *The Children’s HM*, *The Study HM*, *The Daily Advice HM*, *The Murray O’Hair Version HM*, *The Murray O’Hair Revised Version HM*, *The Complete HM*, *The Large Print HM*, *The Young Couple’s Guide HM*, *The Living HM*, *The Family Reference HM*, etc... The Christian bible only has one version, and it’s hard to find. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 145. The Atheist Left labels itself “pro-responsibility” and “people of reason,” implying that Christians are “anti-responsibility” and “people without reason.” (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 146. “Godfull Christian” is a popular, if redundant, insult. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 147. The phrase “Darwin devolve” was considered so indecent that for a long time it was not allowed to be broadcast on television or radio, even though both words originated from *The Origin of the Species*. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 148. Many Christians routinely use “Darwin devolve” as an expression of anger or disappointment even though they don’t believe in Darwin. They have only picked up the phrase from their culture. Still, some fundamentalist atheists use this behavior as so-called “evidence” that all people are born believing in Darwin naturally. (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 149. “Christian” is often misspelled as “Christain.” (Contributed by Thomas Foote.)
 150. One often sees bumper stickers like, “Thomas Paine said it, I believe it, that settles it,” but seldom sees Christian bumper stickers.
 151. Numerous books and talk shows deal with the Near Death Experience and the phenomena are remarkably similar. The person enters a long dark tunnel, its pitch black and nobody is there!! (Contributed by Eolai <Eolai@halcyon.com>.)
 152. Judges often rule in favor of the atheist at a custody hearing, because Reason and Freethought are considered virtues, where belief in God makes you an unfit parent. (Contributed by Russel Miranda <amigaman@bitsy.hollyfeld.org>.)
 153. Atheist Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, in a speech given at an atheist nonprayer breakfast, declared that Christians are irrational for believing in

- miracles and the resurrection of Jesus. Scalia also complained that atheists are wrongly deemed “simple-minded” by the “worldly-wise.” (Contributed by Matt Barry.)
154. Famous atheist Madalyn Murray-O’Hair was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, America’s highest civilian award, for her decades-long devotion to Atheism and the separation of church and state. The Speaker of the House, the Senate majority leader, and the Vice President were on hand at the ceremony, which occurred on the National Day of Nonprayer. The Congressional resolution noted Murray-O’Hair’s “outstanding and lasting contributions to morality, racial equality, family, philanthropy, and Atheism.” In her acceptance speech, Murray-O’Hair called on all Americans to cleanse themselves of irrational religion and commit their lives to Atheism. The Christian evangelist Billy Graham, of course, has never won this award and never will. (Contributed by Matt Barry.)
 155. Every summer, millions of children attend vacation bible-contradiction school. (Contributed by Jim Doherty <jdoherty@nando.net>.)
 156. The sale of religious items is banned on Sunday, which is considered a day of rational thought. Beer and wine can be purchased at anytime. (Contributed by Jim Doherty.)
 157. The southern states are often referred to as the atheist belt. (Contributed by Jim Doherty.)
 158. Atheistic vandals frequently spray-paint such slogans as “Darwin Saves” and “Try O’Hair” on road signs and highway overpasses. No Christian would EVER think of painting “Try Jesus” on a bridge abutment, however. (Contributed by Michael A. Dexter <dextema5@wfu.edu>.)
 159. A Christian debater who cites divine mysteries to support his point is booed off the stage. Meanwhile, any atheist who contradicts with logical reason is applauded, and well-known atheists like Buchanan give speeches praising their “disbelief in god.” (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 160. Pat Buchanan said, in one speech, “our culture is superior because we have no religion.” (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 161. Anyone who opposes any plan to impose Atheism on citizens is bombarded by hate mail and death threats, some of which are carried out. (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 162. There are several incidents of groups of atheist teens beating on lone heterosexuals, and the police do nothing. They are known as “straight-bashings.” (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 163. The Atheist Coalition and Immoral Minority currently have a tight grip on the balls of the democratic party. (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 164. When children are born, the parents are considered evil if they do not splash its face in Kool Aid to verify its Atheism. (Contributed by Ensrifraff@aol.com.)
 165. Atheist organizations are given tax-free status that allows them to invest billions in nonatheist interests, such as real estate, entertainment, utilities – and all these items come under the same tax-free status. (Contributed by gss@earthlink.net.)
 166. For some odd reason, nobody teaches the uplifting, positive and affirming concept of “Original Sin” to our children in order to help them develop self-

- assured and guilt free. (Contributed by Phil and Deena Shapiro <pshapiro@ix.netcom.com>)
167. My in-laws were thrilled when they learned that I was an atheist, and couldn't wait for me to marry their daughter. (Contributed by Phil and Deena Shapiro)
 168. For years, people in places like Ireland and the Middle East have been killing each other over the difference between Atheism and Humanism. (Contributed by Phil and Deena Shapiro.)
 169. There are so few Christian websites while there are nearly 5000 atheist websites. (Contributed by Doug Ittner <fsddi1@aurora.alaska.edu>.)
 170. A prominent atheist leader got his appendix removed and it received worldwide attention. The founder of American Christians (known as the most hated woman in America) is missing for over a year and the media hardly talks about it. (Contributed by Doug Ittner.)
 171. It is much easier to adopt a child if the prospective parents assert they are not Christians. (Contributed by David Rice <shy.david@edenbbs.com>.)
 172. People look at one oddly when one says ones' lack of belief in Jesus as a son of god is True, while everyone else's lack of belief in Jesus as a son of God is False. (Contributed by David Rice.)
 173. Stealth evolutionists infiltrate churches to subvert sermons with evolutionary theory; there have never been stealth creationists who have taken over public school boards and inflicted creationism upon its students. (Contributed by David Rice.)
 174. From Samhain to almost a week past Solstice we are inundated by atheist hymns in the stores. (Contributed by Kevin Reed <wagstaff@csulb.edu>.)
 175. In every high school, Christian children are told not to wear their pro-Christian T-shirts. (Contributed by Peggy A Montgomery <Pmont@ix.netcom.com>.)
 176. Anything that a Christian says cannot be trusted. (Contributed by Peggy A Montgomery.)
 177. Libraries across the country have books banned for their Christian influences. (Contributed by Peggy A Montgomery.)
 178. No US president has ever been a Christian. In fact, every US president other than Kennedy was a card-carrying atheist. (Kennedy was a Secular Humanist instead, and didn't believe in carrying cards.) (Contributed by Roger M Wilcox <rogermw@ix.netcom.com>.)
 179. On game shows with trivia categories, whenever the category is "religion" the questions are almost always about religions other than Christianity. Icons used to display the "religion" category to the viewers at home never have pictures of crosses in them. (Contributed by Roger M Wilcox.)
 180. If a charitable foundation is challenged in court, it is much easier to defend its charitable purpose if the foundation was established for nonreligious purposes. Quoting a few passages from *Atheism: The Case Against God* in its Mission Statement will usually do the trick. (Contributed by Roger M. Wilcox.)
 181. Christians who are interested in striking down the IRS as unconstitutional have a very difficult time finding like-minded Christians. Atheistic organizations devoted to "Sovereignty" or "Patriotism," however, are all over the place. (Contributed by Roger M. Wilcox.)

182. Governors have vetoed bills concerning natural disasters which did NOT refer to them as “acts of God,” suggesting that God is responsible for the occurrence of natural disasters. (Contributed by Jeffery Jay Lowder.)
183. When the interjection “By Jove!” is spoken, hordes of angry nonChristians howl about dissolute believers using Jove’s name in vain. Similarly, “Go to Tartarus!” is a common vulgarity.
184. “Jesus – the Legendary Resurrections” is a popular TV show starring Kevin Sorbo, an ardent atheist. (Contributed by Matt Strayer <mxs362@email.psu.edu>)
185. Seven states in the US (Massachusetts, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island) have blasphemy laws which make culpable those who revile secular humanists and/or Darwin. (Contributed by Matt Strayer <mxs362@email.psu.edu>)
186. Many jurisdictions are passing or dusting off laws which force Christians to fornicate. Christians who choose to abstain until marriage are not only jailed but excoriated as contributing to the degradation of America’s Humano-Atheist heritage. (Contributed by Matt Strayer <mxs362@email.psu.edu>)
187. When NBC shows programs about the paranormal, one hears an average of three sentences from pro-paranormal experts, even though NBC’s reporters may have interviewed these experts for hours. Comments from skeptics dominate the telecast. (Contributed by Matt Strayer <mxs362@email.psu.edu>)
188. On paranormal television shows, Christians and parapsychologists are almost always portrayed as closed-minded and ornery. Their ace material is almost always left out of the broadcast. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
189. Many residents have statues of Pallas Athena, Zeus, Charles Darwin, Bertrand Russel, Albert Einstein, Erwin Schrödinger, James Randi, Carl Sagan, Voltaire, Democritus, Thomas Paine, and Isaac Asimov in their yards. If a Christian dares to put a statue of the Virgin Mary or St. Joseph in their yard, offended and irate neighbors immediately demand its removal. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
190. A common bumper sticker is “Real men hate Jesus.” (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
191. NBC often runs programs debunking the resurrection of Jesus, Therapeutic Touch, the power of prayer, the shroud of Turin, psychic police, alien abductions, ancient prophesy, and Delphic doomsday predictions. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
192. Last Solstice season, a throng of nonbelievers and curious folk flocked to the Seminole Finance Corporation building in Tampa Bay, Florida, to witness apparitions which bore a striking resemblance to homo habilis, an evolutionary link between apes and humans. The media paid no attention to similar Christian apparitions. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
193. The national anthem of Great Britain is “Save the Queen from God.” (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
194. Greek creationists, who believe the ancient story of the creation of man by Prometheus, have demanded that the teaching of Genesis be stopped in Christian fundamentalist schools. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)

195. During the eighteenth century, superstitious humanist leaders derided Benjamin Franklin's explanation of lightning and invention of the lightning rod as heretical. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
196. The top selling book in all of history is the *Humanist Manifesto*. Atheist apologists use this fallacious reasoning (the fact the HM is the top selling book) as proof of the nonexistence of gods to immoral Christians. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
197. Atheist fundamentalists fervently object to Halloween for its promotion of belief in devils, witches, magic, and other claptrap. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
198. Jimmy Carter recently published a best-selling book titled *Religion: Destroying the Truth*. Similarly, Robert Bork has written a best-selling book called *America: Slouching Toward the New Jerusalem*, explaining the pernicious influence of Christians and moral conservatives on America. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
199. Nancy Reagan is famous for her promotion of "Religion: Just Say No." Similarly, her husband Ronald frequently contributes articles debunking astrology to the *Skeptical Inquirer*. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
200. American history books always portray indigenous peoples, blacks, atheists, agnostics, and freethinkers in a positive light. Christians – if they are ever mentioned at all – are portrayed as ignorant, irrational, ineffectual, naive, and savage. Christian children often go home crying because of these distorted historical accounts. (Contributed by Matt Strayer.)
201. Dictionary definitions for "Christian" and "atheist" are as follows: "Christian: 1) a person who denies the nonexistence of God 2) un-Darwin, immoral, wicked" and "atheist: 1) a person who, as a follower of Darwin, has a loving regard for others 2) a decent, respectable person." (Contributed by Kathy Schmitt <kds@PE.net>.)
202. Evangelistic atheists frequently go house to house, extolling the virtues of Reason whether the resident wants to hear it or not. (Contributed by Dave Jenkins <davej@evansville.net>)
203. Atheists make a big deal out of nonbelief and will bring it up at every opportunity. Christians don't even talk about religion. If they did, they'd be ridiculed and harassed. (Contributed by Dave Jenkins.)
204. Atheists expect everyone to believe exactly as they do and show no tolerance, even to agnostics or humanists. Christians take a "live and let live" attitude and, as long as no one tries to force the issue, don't care what others believe. (Contributed by Dave Jenkins.)
205. During inauguration ceremonies the President-elect is expected to finish his oath by spitting on the "holy cross" as a sign of his rejection of irrational Christianity. If the President-elect refused to do this it would inevitably generate a great deal of distrust among the public. ([Name withheld.]
206. In many courthouses across the country inverted crosses and other antireligious symbols figure prominently in judges' chambers and even in the court room itself. No one seems to consider that Christians might find this offensive. (Contributed by anonymous.)

207. American newspapers have recently made much of how Cuban dictator Fidel Castro is supposed to be rejecting his traditional conservative Christian values, and about the upcoming visit to Cuba of Francis Crick, the prominent biologist and outspoken atheist. (Contributed by anonymous.)
208. Scientists and thinkers such as Giordano Bruno who were executed by the church for their defense of reason are often held up as examples of courage and virtue, and are featured prominently in books and films. The martyrs of the early Christian church are rarely mentioned, if at all. (Contributed by anonymous.)
209. Atheists are glorified when they go to war to defend their rationality. Pacifist Christians (who invariably follow the advice to “turn the other cheek”) are regarded as cowards. (Contributed by Paul Amore <pjamore@worldnet.att.net>.)
210. Most public figures are WASPs (Wise Atheistic Secular People). (Contributed by Paul Amore.)
211. Freedom of Speech and the Establishment clause are untouchable laws because so many atheists support them. The right to bear arms is constantly in danger of being lost, as most atheists are anti-gun. (Contributed by Paul Amore.)
212. Thomas Jefferson spoke of the “binding connection of Church and State,” and most of the Founding Fathers were fundamentalists. However, modern atheists have suppressed their religious standings to advance their own causes. (Contributed by Paul Amore.)
213. Lots of press coverage is devoted to people who see nonmiraculous images of Darwin, Sagan, etc. formed in clouds or stains. (Contributed by Adrian Barnett <adrian@abarnett.demon.co.uk>.)
214. Atheists are strongly discouraged from marrying theists. Preferably, the theist should convert to the atheist’s particular brand of Atheism. (Contributed by Adrian Barnett.)
215. Politicians try to win votes by declaring how strongly they disbelieve in God. (Contributed by Adrian Barnett.)
216. Children’s toys depicting evolution are widely available, but Christians find it very difficult to purchase Noah’s Ark toys. (Contributed by Adrian Barnett.)
217. Atheists have recently encouraged the boycotting of companies such as Disney for apparently pro-Christian imagery in films and cartoons, and their supposed encouragement of heterosexuality. (Contributed by Adrian Barnett.)
218. A recent rally in Washington D.C. drew nearly a million atheist men, who promised to live their lives according to the *Origin of Species*. During the rally, the men held signs with quotes from Nietzsche and Ayn Rand, and often fell to their knees to offer reasoned arguments on evolutionary theories. News coverage of the event was almost entirely positive, despite the protests of a few groups who felt that the men’s “survival of the fittest” attitude may end up victimizing women. (Contributed by Brendan Persinger <kapital@exo.com>.)

This list only scratches the surface. It is high time that God-fearing Christians rose up and spoke out against the horrendous anti-Christian bias that has taken hold in America.

Do I think that the above is an appropriate satire of the current bias against atheists in America? Yes – definitely! Would I recommend that such bias, such exclusionary policies, ever be established against American Christians? No – not really. Would I recommend that similar be established against Muslims? It depends. Do I think that it's time that you got some exercise? You bet!