

## A CHRISTIAN TRIES TO EXPLAIN AWAY RICHARD DAWKINS AWARENESS THAT RELIGION LEADS TO VIOLENCE

The Dawkins Delusion by Alister McGrath with Joanna Collicutt McGrath, SPCK, London, 2007

A book claiming to answer Richard Dawkins book, The God Delusion, has appeared. It makes for interesting reading and it gets more interesting when one probes its lies and claims and distortions. The book is a totally inadequate reply to The God Delusion.

We will see here how it hedges around what Dawkin's exposed about religion's unique ability to create unique violence. And that is on top of its regular power to cause regular violence!

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Dawkins uses religious suicide bombers as an example of how religion leads to violence. He ignores studies that show the real reasons why some people are driven to do these things. They might see themselves as fighting for their people for example. Religious belief is not enough or is it necessary to cause suicide bombers to kill.

But why suicide bombings? The suicide bomber thinks they are ethical and ethics is a part of religion meaning the bombings are religious. Also, one doesn't need to be a suicide bomber to kill. The bombers certainly believed there was a reward for them and religion is to blame for that. Christians and Muslims though they may die to save people that is only the result of what they do, not a motive, for their motive is to sacrifice for God. Remember how Jesus said that loving God with all your being is the most important commandment and loving yourself and your neighbour isn't so important? Jesus said we must love others for God's sake meaning his sake is what matters not the other people.

The Catholic Church blackmailing women in the poorer parts of the world to have sex with their HIV husbands without condoms isn't mentioned. Religion does lead to evil.

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Atheism has led to great bloodshed and persecution of priests and the destruction of Churches in Russia so Dawkins is naïve to say that atheists are incapable of persecuting and religion is

It was political socialist ideologies that did this. Atheists don't necessarily have to get involved in politics or socialism or extreme socialism. It is as absurd to say that these killings were done in the name of tallness if it is tall people who did the killing as to say it was done in the name of atheism just because atheist ideologies did these things. The more atheistic you are and the surer you are that you are right, the less need you will see for persecuting. The best way to fight dangerous forces such as religion and superstition is with confidence and facts and politeness and firmness. The atheists who engaged in such persecutions were unsure of their atheism and held it more for political reasons than intellectual. Atheism shouldn't lead to bloodletting and venom. Religion can for it is possible that if God exists and because we don't live in an ideal universe he might want you to kill people. Atheists do not have books of authoritative scripture that command them on infallible or divine authority to slaughter but religion does. If an atheist kills over atheism then the atheist has failed to see the utter horror of killing somebody. If all we have is this life then we cannot hurt others. Also, what peace can you have in this life if you unleash harm? You cannot feel safe when you become an enemy for that is experiencing the world as an unsafe place.

A believer in a life after death won't be able to see death as utterly evil. The atheist kills in spite of his atheism and not because of it.

Killing is a human problem not an atheist problem. One may say, "Killing is a human problem not a religious problem." This actually is saying that any religion advocating murder or capital punishment is not a religion. There is dishonesty in that. It also allows religions that kill to thrive for they are not recognised for the religions they are. You must identify the enemy or danger before you can work out how to handle it. A evil religion is often described as a perversion of religion - it should be described as a religion. It may be described as a perverted religion if its evil deeds really do not follow from its scriptures and its doctrines. But a perverted religion is still a religion.

Atheism attempts to be open and hide nothing and welcomes full examination and logical evaluation. As for religion, you can only assume that the religion is man-made until its proven to be divinely made. Otherwise you run the risk of following men as if you were following God. And even if the religion is of God and you cannot prove it, your motivation is to follow

the religion out of devotion to men.

There are so many different religions therefore most of them if not all are man-made.

People tend to prefer a God that suits them.

Religion makes huge claims and offers paltry or fraudulent evidence for them. You need better than that. You need proof before you can tell your child that he will go to Hell forever if he doesn't believe in Jesus. You need proof to declare something a fact. The person who thinks his favourite assumptions and beliefs are facts is self-deluded or play acting.

We assume that the criminal must be regarded as innocent until proven guilty. We cannot take that attitude with every religion. It has to be a case of guilty of being merely human until proven divine.

To worship a God made by men is to worship an idol. Christianity teaches that sin is preferring something to God who deserves all our devotion. The actions of sin are really indications of that attitude. Sin is not just wrong actions for the believer. It is primarily an attitude that is expressed by those actions. Thus a person could seem to be very holy and still be in fact worshipping things other than the real God.

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Jesus did not see the Old Testament law as wrong but wanted it to be interpreted through him being seen as the correct interpretation. It is for this reason that Christians have never used the cultic law given out in the Law.

Christianity which doesn't execute adulterers should be doing it at least sometime. Jesus taught mercy and the law commanded that adulterers be stoned to death. The only way the two could agree is if some adulterers were forgiven but to forgive all is to do away with the Law. Mercy should prove the Law not abolish it. What the book is saying here is plain intellectual dishonesty.

At least Ward is saying that Jesus approved of the killings endorsed by the law of adulterers. They were stoned to death as were heretics. Jesus said that even wanting to commit adultery is adultery. To apply the law now would mean stoning everybody. So for that reason the killings do not take place anymore. It is not because they are wrong but because they are right but impractical. Ward is right for Jesus said he came not to relax the law but to fulfil and perfect it and make it tougher.

Ward does not complain that Dawkins paints godly people as deluded while Jesus who claimed to be God is stated by him to maybe have made an honest mistake! Ward probably realises that delusion and honest mistakes are compatible.