

In Defense of the Moral Integrity and Values of Atheism

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While discussing the subject of atheism and humanism with many Christians, I frequently encounter many false allegations and misrepresentations relating to atheism and to the use of reason and logic to inform and guide us in our daily lives that I would like to address here.

First, regarding atheism. Atheism is simply the recognition that there is no substantive physical evidence that any supernatural being such as God exists and thus there is no reason to believe in or worship such a being. Most atheists I know, myself included, derive our moral standards in part from the best that all the great religions throughout history, including Christianity, have to offer. Not because they were dictated by some supernatural being, but because they provide a logical framework for ethical behavior for the benefit of all human beings and because they are essential to maintaining a functioning civil society. Civilization would collapse without them. For more information, please check out www.centralcoloradohumanists.org. Any allegation that atheists believe they can "do what they want" leading to our country's having "devolved into what we see today" makes no sense at all.

I hear the comment that America was a far more moral country in the past than it is today. This ignores the historical facts of slavery, segregation, discrimination, near extermination of Native Americans, and witch-burnings, among other atrocities. I believe our sensitivity and compassion towards others today comes closer to the precepts put forth by Jesus than at any earlier time in our history.

Another major misrepresentation one hears relates to evolution. There is today no other body of knowledge that is so thoroughly studied and documented and successfully demonstrated across all scientific disciplines as evolution. We are learning in ever increasing detail how DNA works, how it changes over time, and how these changes, along with natural selection, drive the modification of species and development of new species. There is not a creditable scientist on this planet, atheist or otherwise, who doesn't recognize these facts. Any claim that "intelligence levels have decreased since evolution started being taught in our schools" is ludicrous. Should we ever decide to restrict the teaching of evolution, then we would surely witness a decline in academic achievement and scientific progress in our country. Just look at our world today with its smart phones, laptop computers, the Internet, Mars landers and space probes, satellite communications, electric and hybrid vehicles, microwave ovens, etc., for evidence that intelligence levels have been increasing.

Finally, I should put these religious leaders' worried minds at ease regarding their First Amendment rights to free speech and the practice of religion. Atheists may take issue with their expressed beliefs, just as they do with ours, but atheists have no intention of interfering with

anyone's First Amendment rights (part of that code of ethical behavior I mentioned earlier). We very firmly defend free speech, freedom of expression, religious freedom, separation of church and state, and freedom from promotion of anyone's religious beliefs in our public schools. After all, the First Amendment serves us all.