



'Why believe in a god?' they ask



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the fact that Christmas Day is its climax and centerpiece and is a national holiday (which is not the case with other "holy days"). Let's keep it this way! Let's make every effort to ensure that Christ remains as the reason for the season. Let's keep Christ in Christmas!

The humanist's newest ad campaign is no innocent and innocuous "holiday greeting." It has a purpose. It is part of a plan. It is another step in the direction of making our society...

...more unbelieving: wherein God no longer has a place and role;

...more secularistic: where man versus God is the center and source of life, goodness and meaning, and can define and decide on matters without recourse or accountability to a supreme being, to the "Omni:" the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God, creator of the universe;

...more relativistic: where revealed and absolute truth is no longer upheld, but where one's own concocted "truths" reign supreme, however nonsensical these may be;

...more individualistic: whereby any one of us can become the arbiter of right and wrong, good and evil and is entitled to look out for #1, namely oneself, and forgo the common good and the good of our neighbor — unless we feel like it, of course.

Amidst such a concerted effort to root Christianity from culture, and in light of targeted campaigns against faith, we should respond to the question they pose and answer in such an inadequate manner: "Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness' sake."

First, "Why believe in a god?" Good question. No reason to believe in any ole god: but there is every reason to believe in the God of the universe... in God almighty, who was and is and is to come... in the God who has revealed himself to us and has proven his existence... in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen... in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father... through whom all things were made... Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven... and by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man... and for our sake was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, died and was buried, and on the third day rose again in fulfillment of the scriptures... ascended into heaven and is seated at the right

hand of the Father... Who will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and whose kingdom will have no end!

There are plenty of good reasons to believe in that one true God, in the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit... the Lord and the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son... and with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified... and has spoken through the prophets.

Why believe in God? For one main reason — although there are many more: because there is nothing more intelligent nor reasonable than to believe in the God who is, *because he is!* Because the source of all existence, of life itself, the great "I AM," exists and has revealed himself to us as the God of love and mercy — as the one eternal Triune God who has our good in mind and has a plan for each of our lives, here and now and for all eternity. Not to believe in God is to go against the evidence.

In fact, it takes more faith to believe there is no God than to believe in the God who is! God has made his existence rather evident to humanity by several means: most certainly and clearly through divine revelation, but also by leaving his fingerprints all over creation and by imprinting within our hearts a desire for him, a law written in our hearts by which we are inclined to believe and a sense of right and wrong — natural law — which comes from being created in his image and likeness. No, this is not merely "conditioning" or "imprinting" at an early age: it is mankind's longest quest, a deep yearning within to find the God without. As St. Paul says in his Letter to the Romans speaking of persistent unbelief, "that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Rom 1:19-20)

If God exists, we better be believing! If he does and we don't, we will have missed out on quite a bit — and will bear the consequences of that unbelief. As the French philosopher Blaise Pascal stated, it is a wise decision to wager that God exists, since "If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing." Which leads us to another very important reason, not only to believe in God, but to

believe God and do whatever he tells us: God does much more than make us good or Godlike; he resolves a greater problem we have: the problem of eternal damnation, of eternal separation from him, the source of all life.

With regards to the second part of the ad, the answer to their question, "Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness' sake," is based on a false assumption: that one can be good of one's own accord, and for the sake of goodness itself. Who defines what good is? Jesus clearly points to this when the rich young man approaches him and calls him "good teacher" and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. (Mk 10:17) Jesus' response is a bit startling to those who may not realize what he is up to: Jesus responds with a question, "Why do you call me 'good'? God alone is good." Was Jesus implying, as some may wish to propose, that he was not God or was not aware that he is God? Certainly not, as he repeated claims in no uncertain terms to be God, such as when he says "The Father and I are One" (Jn 10:30) and "Whoever sees Me sees the Father" (Jn 14:9). Furthermore, he proves his divinity and proves that in him are fulfilled hundreds of prophecies given over hundreds of years about the expected Messiah, by his miraculous incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. In pointing out that God alone is good, Jesus calls the rich young man — and you and me — to recognize who this good teacher is: God himself come down to earth, the only source of goodness, and goodness itself! Jesus makes him realize that goodness comes, not from the mere observance of rules and regulations, rituals and rites — good and necessary as these may be, and they are! — but that goodness goes far beyond anything we can achieve: goodness is God himself. Goodness is the essence of God and any share in it comes from a share in his very life. So, if one wishes to be good, one must be in intimate communion with the source of goodness: God himself. If there is a possibility of attaining goodness, truth and beauty, it is because God Triune is good, truth, love and beauty.

Interestingly enough, the humanist's ad reveals a Christian belief in a round-about way: the truth that we are all called to be good. God expects us to be good. Even humanists know that, as they point to the value of and need for goodness by calling people to be good! But they mistakenly think we can achieve goodness on our own, or be good for goodness' sake — as if it were a living reality that existed of its own accord. They seem to acknowledge that God is seen



as the source of goodness by millions of people. Moreover, the timing of their ad — launched during the Christian Christmas season — implies that they acknowledge that millions of Americans believe that Christ is God. Thanks for the endorsement! That is indeed what we believe: that Christ is the Son of the living God, God himself come down from heaven for our salvation! This we believe: that the child in the manger is the greatest good any human being has ever been given, and that the source of goodness himself took on human flesh so that we might indeed be good and be holy as the Lord our God is holy. (cf. Mt 5:48)

Clearly, those who are investing their time, treasure and talent in advancing their secularist and atheistic agenda — in a desire to change the way we think, feel, speak about, and act on matters related to God, faith and church — don't see nor hear what we see and hear when angels and shepherds announce that a king has been born to us, Christ the Lord. Pray for them. Pray that they come to know, love and serve the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. Invite them and all others to study the evidence Christ has given us of the existence of the Triune God. Study the evidence yourself, and learn more about what humanists and atheists are now doing to undermine Christianity and society's Christian roots, in what is being called a "new atheism." Learn how to become an effective proclaimer and defender of truth, so that all might know beyond a doubt that Jesus Christ is Lord! (I recommend reading "Answering the New Atheism: Dismantling Dawkins' Case Against God" by Scott Hahn and Benjamin Wiker.)

To any agnostics, atheists and other nontheists I say this: Feeling alone? Study Jesus Christ and his claims, and wrestle honestly with the evidence He provides. Come: "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord." (Ps 34:8) Join us! You will not be disappointed. This Christ and this church of ours can also be yours!

To my fellow Catholic Christians I say: Go, now, believe and be good for eternal happiness' sake; announce joyfully these glad tidings of great joy for all people; and have yourself a very Merry Christmas!

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Glad you asked! I'll tell you why! "Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness' sake," is the most recent atheistic move to try to rain on our parade and undermine our Christian celebration of Christmas. Sponsored by the American Humanist Association, their plan is to display their colorful "godless greetings" during the so-called "holiday season" on 200 buses in Washington, D.C. For all their disbelief, some atheists sure have a thing with God! They can't get over him! As a matter of fact, many atheists seem to be obsessed with his existence. But beyond that, the most militant among them have become increasingly invested in attacking and undermining religious belief — particularly Christianity — no longer content with simply questioning or refuting its principle beliefs and practices. No, militant atheists are interested in displacing Christian beliefs from society at all levels and replacing them with secular humanist beliefs — for, in case you haven't noticed, believing there is no God is a belief, and professing that there is no God is a "profession of faith," of a belief, of a "creed." So, even atheists "believe" — misguided or incomplete as their belief may be.

Though they say their intent is simply to reach out to their audiences, they intend more than that. According to Fred Edwards, spokesman for the humanist group, "We are trying to reach our audience, and sometimes in order to reach an audience, everybody has to hear you," adding that, "Our reason for doing it during the holidays is there are an awful lot of agnostics, atheists and other types of nontheists who feel a little alone during the holidays because of its association with traditional religion." Should it come as a surprise that the so-called "holiday season" which is really a season of holy days, should be associated with traditional religion? Should it not be so? Many would rather disassociate the "holidays" from the reason for the season: the birth of Christ the Lord. Sure, some celebrate other beliefs and values at this time, but Christmas is about Christ — and Christmas is the primary festivity we are celebrating, as clearly shown by