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Atheists can't be Republicans

by CJ Wereleman

*The secular have no place in today's GOP — and libertarian atheists should realize that now.*

Actually CJ, they do: it's at the back of the bus. Which brings up an interesting question - why do they prefer the back of the Republican bus ... to a seat in the Democratic bus?

Obviously, there must be issues, more important to these Atheists, than religion. That was your first mistake: assuming that because they are Atheists, that religion would necessarily be their overriding motivation. Obviously, it is not.

*We atheists like to chastise the religious for their child-like belief in an imaginary friend, but, equally, the time has come for the atheist movement to grow up.*

CJ, the "Atheist movement" (whatever that means) and religious people are not equal ... and never will be.

*It’s understood that the so-called new atheist movement began at the start of the new millennium with the mainstream emergence of luminaries Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and others. For much of the first decade of the new century, the atheist movement behaved like a curious child in search of meaning to its own existence. Now that the child is a teenager on its way to adulthood, it needs to start acting like a grown up.*

CJ, your attempt at creating an analogy between a group of people with one disbelief in common and a human child seems awfully weak. I certainly hope this gets better ... for your sake.

*The atheist movement comprises more than 2,000 groups and organizations in the U.S. today,*

CJ, it would have been more accurate to say that there are more than 2,000 groups and organizations who share a disbelief in God. But these groups don't necessarily agree on other beliefs.

For example, Objectivists are Atheists, yet few Atheists agree with some of the core Objectivist beliefs and therefore are hardly part of the same "movement." Another example would be Libertarians, some of whom are Atheists, yet certainly are not well represented among Atheist groups.

*but the movement, in composition and purpose, has failed to establish a coherent cause outside of validating non-belief and offering platitudes towards protecting the separation of church and state.*

CJ, validating nonbelief *is* their purpose, so you are accusing them of failing at things that you consider part of their purpose, but that they do not. And what is your complaint about their protection of Church and State? Why do you call them "platitudes?"

*Another thing one notices with the atheist movement is the fact it is predominantly upwardly middle-class, white and male.*

CJ, so what? The same is true of University professors and corporate engineers. What's your point?

*Sikivu Hutchinson writes, in her essay “Prayer Warriors and Freethinkers”: “If mainstream freethought and humanism continue to reflect the narrow cultural interests of white elites who have disposable income to go to conferences then the secular movement is destined to remain marginal and insular.”*

Interesting choice CJ, you follow your accusation of white male dominance by quoting a black female. If you keep providing counter examples to your own premise, my response will be unnecessary.

As for what she said, maybe she should consider opening up her own psychic hotline now that she feels competent to predict the future.

She also contradicts her own premise since she, herself, is an example of someone who reaches a sizable audience within the community she is disparaging.

*The movement has an image problem.*

CJ, that's pretty easy to explain. Ghost Worshippers are desperately trying to convince the world that Atheists are evil and immoral in an attempt to hang on to their crumbling empire.

On top of that, there are idiots like you who aggravate the problem by attacking from within, as if Atheists didn't already have enough enemies manufacturing lies about them.

*An image that isn’t helped by the ceaseless and over-simplified fear-mongering over Islamic terrorism from the likes of Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins*

CJ, perhaps you could provide specific examples?

The reason you don't, but rely instead on generalized accusations, is because then you would have to backup your claims.

*rhetoric that not only ignores our long history of foreign policy blunders in the Middle East, but also echoes the neo-conservatives, the Israel lobby and the entire right-wing echo chamber.*

CJ, see previous reply.

*Nathan Lean, author of “The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims,”*

CJ, the title of his book ignores the fact that fear of Muslims does not have to be manufactured ... it is justified by Muslims on a daily basis. I get the impression that you haven't actually ever read ... a newspaper.

*Nathan Lean writes, “The New Atheists became the new Islamophobes, their invectives against Muslims resembling the rowdy, uneducated ramblings of backwoods racists rather than appraisals based on intellect, rationality and reason.”*

CJ, Lean seems quite adept at name-calling himself. It might do him some good to look up the word "hypocrite"; and what evidence does Lean offer that Atheist appraisals are *not* based on intellect, rationality, and reason?

I'm betting that Lean's opinion is not based on evidence but on the fact that they came up with different conclusions than he did. Therefore, Lean assumes that it must be their logic and reason that is faulty.

*It’s time for the movement to address bigger and real issues, and the biggest issue of our time is income inequality.*

CJ, now your argument has completely run off the rails, and is basically finished.

Income inequality has absolutely nothing to do with Atheism. You have attempted to connect two things which are not logically connected.

Forget about Lean; now you are the one who needs to get over to a dictionary ... and look up the word "scatterbrain."

*Of all the developed nations, the U.S. has the most unequal distribution of income. In the past decade, 95 percent of all economic gains have gone to the top 1 percent. A mere 400 individuals own one-half of the entire nation’s wealth. Meanwhile, median household income keeps falling, and our poverty levels resemble that of the Great Depression era. In other words, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and the middle class is being decimated.*

CJ, I agree with everything you just copied and pasted. And I think I feel as strongly about it as you do. But so do many Christians and Muslims. It is not an Atheist issue, no matter how desperately you attempt to make it one.

*Atheists like to talk about building a better world, one that is absent of religiosity in the public square, but where are the atheist groups on helping tackle the single biggest tear in the fabric of our society — wealth disparity? They are nowhere.*

CJ, what you fail to understand is that many of those Atheists are fighting for wealth equality - but not as Atheists - as Americans; and you, yourself ... are the proof.

You are attempting to redefine the word "Atheist." That is logically fallacious. It is your thinking that must conform to the rules of language ... not the other way around.

*Its absence on the most pressing moral issue of our time makes it difficult for the movement to establish meaningful partnerships with other moral communities.*

CJ, get to a dictionary. Learn the terms before trying to use them. Atheism has nothing to do with morals. An immoral person can be an Atheist. An excellent example would be Stalin. Your lack of understanding of basic English is embarrassing. Which makes me wonder ... do you get paid to write?

*To remain white, middle class, intellectually smug and mostly apolitical will not only serve to alienate atheism from minorities and the poor, but will also ensure it remains a politically impotent movement that is incapable of building a better America.*

CJ, Atheists don't need a moron like you to lecture us on all the things you misunderstand. Please, if you want to do the Atheist movement a huge favor, take this advice:

Drop down to your knees and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. Do it. Do it now. Christians will accept you with open arms, and Atheists will be minus one irritating idiot. Believe me ... we will survive without you.

*Growing up means less time and money spent on self-righteous billboard campaigns, and, instead, more resources allocated to fighting the political conditions that have caused this nation’s middle class and infrastructure to resemble that of a hyper-religious Third World nation.*

CJ, time for a reality check - we ARE a hyper religious nation.

There is nothing preventing you from fighting wealth inequality. There are many groups formed for exactly that purpose. Why don't you work with groups appropriate for your various causes? Why do you attempt to convert Atheists to your pet personal cause?

As you yourself have lamented ... it hasn't gone very well.

*Christopher Hitchens wrote that the intellectual advantage of atheism is its ability to reject unprovable assertions on face value.*

CJ, Atheism doesn't reject all unprovable assertions ... only unprovable religious assertions. That is the part you don't seem to get.

*It’s why we don’t believe in the supernatural.*

Wrong again CJ. You can find Atheists who believe in the supernatural. They seem just as open to woo as Theists. The only guarantee you get with an Atheist, is freedom from religious supernatural beliefs.

*Equally, it’s why we shouldn’t believe in a myth that is causing greater harm than creationism — the myth of trickle-down economics, which remains the economic blueprint for today’s Republican Party, despite the world’s leading economists lampooning it as an abject failure.*

CJ, I agree again with the last part. Milton Friedman should be exhumed so that his Nobel Prize for Economics can be removed from his casket.

But you should be writing this to the appropriate groups ... not to Atheists.

*In the four decades that followed FDR’s New Deal, our middle class became the envy of the world. In an op-ed titled “Abject Failure of Reaganomics,”* *Robert Parry writes, “It was the federal government that essentially created the Great American Middle Class — from the New Deal policies of the 1930s through other reforms of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, from Social Security to Wall Street regulation to labor rights to the GI Bill to the Interstate Highway System to the space program’s technological advances to Medicare and Medicaid to the minimum wage to civil rights.” But then came the period of Reagan’s holy trinity — privatization, deregulation, and free trade. Now here we are today — facing the largest economic crisis since the 1930s.*

CJ, I couldn't have said it better. At least your cut-and-paste powers are impressive.

*Atheists are secularists, and a secularist cannot be a member of today’s Republican Party.*

Wrong again CJ ... many are.

*You’re either one or the other. You cannot be both.*

CJ, google "false dichotomy."

*Now, I am acutely aware that a great number of atheists identify with the libertarian wing of the Republican Party, but this is comical.*

CJ, comical or not ... it contradicts your premise.

*A lack of evidence is why atheists don’t believe in God.*

CJ, congratulations - you got that one right. Unfortunately, you don't realize that Atheism doesn't go beyond that ... by definition.

*But to believe in libertarianism is in itself an act of faith, because libertarianism has not only never been tried anywhere, but an overwhelming number of economists reject the philosophy as little more than “capitalism with the gloves off” — a condition that would only exacerbate the winner-takes-all society we have today.*

*If an atheist is looking for political evidence, the evidence we have is that not only is today’s Republican Party a theocratic sponsor, it’s also a party that has been proven wrong on just about everything in the past three decades or more: from evolution to climate change, trickle-down economics, that the Iraqis would greet us as liberators, that the Bush tax cuts would lead to jobs. It didn’t. It added $3 trillion to the debt. They were wrong that the stimulus would trigger inflation, that austerity stimulates an economy and that universal healthcare is worse than slavery.*

CJ, while many of the things you say are true in general, they cannot be applied to Republicans, individually. The current Republican civil war should make that clear even to someone as dense as you.

*It’s time for the atheist movement to get off the political sidelines. It’s time to truly help this country become a better place to live for all its citizens. The recent Values Voter Summit demonstrated that the likely 2016 GOP frontrunners and its base wish to transform America’s secular state into a tyrannical theocracy — a nirvana absent gays, liberals, immigrants, Muslims and science books. If the atheist movement doesn’t evolve into a politically agitated, unified and mobilized Secular Left, then the Christian Right might just get its way.*

CJ, Atheists *are* involved in battling the Christian Right. As Atheists they battle them on religious issues. As members of other groups (mostly Liberal and Democratic) they battle them on economic and political issues.

You need to get your head on straight and learn to focus, rather than trying to simplify everything by creating one grand monolithic group which, as you have already seen, isn't working.

*In fighting for truly meaningful social justice, such as income equality and the rights of minorities, the movement can form partnerships with communities that share common causes. For instance, building a bridge with certain religious communities that are equally concerned with fighting against class inequality and social injustice.*

CJ, we can do that without redefining Atheism. There is no law that prevents you from being a member of more than one organization.

*This would broaden the appeal of the atheism movement, and might just get people to like us a little more. Walter Bristol, an atheist interfaith activist, wrote, “Economic inequality is one of the most imminent issues facing Western society today. Any progressive movement that chooses to dismiss it is and will be rightfully dismissed themselves.”*

CJ, I can see why you chose to quote him. But he is as wrong as you are. Atheism hasn't dismissed it because it was never part of Atheism to begin with. As for being dismissed ourselves, Ghost Worshippers have been attempting to eliminate us for centuries. Now they are the ones facing elimination. So Bristol's quote doesn't worry me any more than your tripe.

*Atheists are the fastest growing minority in the country. We now have the critical mass to shape elections and policy.*

CJ, we may be the fastest growing, but we are still minute: single digits unless you can get other nonbelievers to come out of the closet. And as I pointed out, many are Republicans, Libertarians, Objectivists, and other conservative types. So don't expect all those future Atheists to fall in line with your political beliefs, because many don't right now.

*Either we seize our potential political power, thus acting like the grown up in the room, or we can continue to focus on the ‘pettier’ or issues, thus continuing to act like a petulant child.*

CJ, the sooner you convert ... to anything; the better off Atheists will be. Hey, I hear the Muslims are accepting applications. Oh I'm sorry ... was that Islamophobic?

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Researchers use the Big Bang afterglow

to rule out a controversial theory

that the accelerating expansion of the universe

is an illusion because Earth is at the center of the universe

While the findings don't explain the cosmic speed-up, they eliminate one provocative possibility that our planet, solar system and galaxy are at the center of the universe and that there is no dark energy.

The 2011 Nobel Prize was awarded for the discovery that the expansion of the universe is accelerating. One leading idea to explain the acceleration is a new, mysterious substance called dark energy, which is thought to make up nearly three-fourths of the energy of the universe. But another alternative is that the Earth, our solar system and Milky Way galaxy are at the center of the universe. That theory violates the standard assumption that the universe has no center, but if true, then cosmic acceleration could be explained without dark energy or any new laws of physics.

But researchers found that this model can't hold up to other observational tests. The sky glows with light left over from the Big Bang, also known as the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation, so they calculated how that glow would be affected. Their findings show that the model's prediction is completely contrary to the glow that has been measured.

Essentially, scientists held a mirror up to the universe and asked if the reflection was special. The reflection shows that we do not appear to live in a special location, and decisively excludes this explanation for the universe's accelerating expansion.

It would be a great relief to be able to understand a basic problem of cosmology within the known laws of physics, but this research is an important step in explaining the physics responsible for the cosmic acceleration.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

WOODY ALLEN (no biography - previously quoted)

"If only God would give me some clear sign!

Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank."