**MAY 15, 2011 THESKEPTICARENA.COM**

**THIS WEEK WE PAY ANOTHER VISIT TO THE WEB SITE OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST, J.W. WARTICK. HIS ESSAY BEGINS WITH THE TITLE ...**

**ON THE STATEMENT THAT “WE ARE ALL ATHEISTS”**

**“We are all atheists to other religions, we [atheists] just take it one step further.” The phrase initially has some kind of shock value, and then it gets you thinking. As a Christian, it may have you thinking, “Wow, I never thought of it that way… maybe there is something to this ‘atheism’ thing.”**

**JW, THE STATEMENT DOESN'T PROVE OR DISPROVE WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING TO "THIS ATHEISM THING." WHAT IT DOES IS, IT POINTS OUT A SIMPLE FACT: "WE ARE ALL ATHEISTIC TO THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF OTHERS."**

**As an atheist, it may have you saying “Yeah, you Christians are just as rational/skeptical as we atheists about other religions, why not just apply that same logic to your own?”**

**GOOD QUESTION JW. YOU ARE COMPLETELY SKEPTICAL OF MOHAMMED'S FLIGHT UP TO HEAVEN. BUT YOU HAVE NO PROBLEM BELIEVING THAT THE EARTH STOPPED ROTATING FOR ONE DAY. IF THAT HAD BEEN IN THE KORAN INSTEAD OF THE BIBLE, YOU WOULD HAVE LAUGHED YOUR ASS OFF.**

**I’ve addressed this statement/argument/quip/whathaveyou before. Yet I keep seeing it pop up in everyday conversation and even from people like Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss in his debate with William Lane Craig.**

**JW, HOW IGNORANT OF DAWKINS AND KRAUSS TO KEEP USING IT AFTER YOU HAVE ALREADY EXPLAINED IT. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY YOUR REBUTTAL DIDN'T PUT AN END TO THE USE OF THAT STATEMENT/ARGUMENT/QUIP/WHATHAVEYOU.**

**There’s a problem though, in fact, there’s more than one problem:**

**THAT IS CORRECT JW. WHEN YOU COUNT UP THE NUMBER OF RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD, YOU WILL HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF JUST HOW MANY PROBLEMS THERE ARE.**

**1) The statement is false**

**2) The statement is irrational**

**3) The statement–as with many false or irrational statements–proves too much (or too little).**

**Let’s examine each of these in turn.**

**IT'S YOUR FUNERAL JW.**

1. **The Statement is False**

**The idea that Christians are atheists to all other religions is simply false.**

**JW, NICE ASSERTION.**

**As I’ve explained elsewhere, to other religions, I am not an atheist, I am a rival theist–an adherent of another religion.**

**JW, IT'S TRUE THAT YOU ARE NOT AN ATHEIST. THAT IS NOT WHAT THE STATEMENT MEANS. THE STATEMENT MEANS THAT YOU ARE "ATHEISTIC" TO OTHER RELIGIONS, IN THAT YOU BELIEVE THEIR BELIEFS ARE FALSE.**

**REREAD THE STATEMENT AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS ESSAY. IT DOES NOT SAY "WE ARE ALL ATHEISTS." IT SAYS "WE ARE ALL ATHEISTS TO OTHER RELIGIONS." IN ORDER TO FLOAT YOUR LITTLE THEORY, YOU DID WHAT BELIEVERS ALWAYS DO - YOU OMITTED THE INCONVENIENT WORDS AND THEN TOOK IT OUT OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT WAS INTENDED.**

**WHAT A COINCIDENCE: I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED THE EXACT PROCESS YOU USE WHEN READING YOUR BIBLE, HAVEN'T I?**

**I’m not an atheist to a Hindu, I am a theist of a different tradition.**

**JW, IT IS TRUE THAT YOU ARE A THEIST OF A DIFFERENT BELIEF, AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT MAKES YOU ATHEISTIC TOWARDS HINDU BELIEFS.**

**JW, YOU ARE A CARBON COPY OF WILLIAM LANE CRAIG (DOWN BOY, THAT WAS NOT THE COMPLIMENT YOU THINK IT WAS). HE TOO DISINGENUOUSLY MISREPRESENTS NEARLY EVERYTHING HE ARGUES.**

**I WENT TO THE DICTIONARY TO FIND THE RIGHT WORD TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE LIKE CRAIG AND YOURSELF. FIRST, I TRIED "CLEVER." BUT THAT WORD DIDN'T FIT. HOWEVER, A SYNONYM CAUGHT MY EYE ... "CUNNING":**

**1. Sly; crafty; clever in surreptitious behaviour.**

**JW, NOW THAT DEFINITION FITS YOU GUYS LIKE A GLOVE.**

**2. Skillful, artful.**

**OKAY JW, I'LL GIVE YOU GUYS CREDIT FOR THAT ONE TOO. BOTH OF YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY PUT MUCH EFFORT INTO DEVELOPING THE CUNNING SKILLS NECESSARY TO DEFEND YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.**

**3. Cute, appealing.**

**JW, I LEFT THAT ONE IN, JUST TO SHOW THAT I TOO HAVE COMPASSION. BUT TO BE CLEAR, I DON'T FIND "LIARS FOR JESUS" TO BE EITHER CUTE OR APPEALING.**

**To the Muslim, I’m not an atheist–I’m a rival theistic believer. So, simply put, the statement is false.**

**JW, YOU SIMPLY REPEATED YOUR PREVIOUS MISUNDERSTANDING. THE STATEMENT IS, IN FACT, FALSE IF YOU CHANGE THE CONTEXT THAT THE WORD ATHEIST WAS USED IN. HOWEVER, THAT DOES NOT MAKE THE STATEMENT FALSE - IT ONLY MAKES YOUR MISREPRESENTATION TRUE.**

**Atheism, by definition, is the belief that there is no God.**

**JW, I FOUND THESE DEFINITIONS:**

**WICTIONARY:**

**1. The rejection of belief in the existence of a god or gods.**

**2. The stance that a deity or deities do not exist (gnostic atheism).**

**DICTIONARY.COM:**

**1. The doctrine or belief that there is no god.**

**2. Disbelief in the existence of a supreme being or beings.**

**JW, THAT FIRST DEFINITION IN WICTIONARY, IS THE PROOF THAT YOU ARE ATHEISTIC TOWARDS ALLAH. YEAH, I KNOW JW, THE DICTIONARY, LIKE LOGIC, IS NEVER THE BELIEVER'S FRIEND.**

**ATHEISTS WHO CLAIM THAT THERE IS NO GOD (GNOSTIC ATHEISM) HAVE FOOLISHLY TAKEN THE POSITION OF MAKING A CLAIM WHICH THEY CANNOT PROVE.**

**ATHEISTS WHO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE, AND THEREFORE DO NOT ASSERT TO KNOW THE ANSWER, TAKE THE POSITIONS DEFINED BY #1 IN WICTIONARY AND #2 IN DICTIONARY.COM.**

**THOSE ATHEISTS DO NOT ASSERT "THERE IS NO GOD." THEY STATE THAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF ANY GOD BASED ON THE LACK OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT BELIEF IN ANY GOD.**

**THAT IS WHY MANY AGNOSTICS ARE ATHEISTS BUT AREN'T AWARE OF IT. THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE NUANCES OF THE DEFINITIONS. HOWEVER, THOSE AGNOSTICS WHO BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER CAN NEVER BE KNOWN FALL INTO A SEPARATE CATEGORY.**

**Therefore, because I believe in a God, I am not an atheist, by definition.**

**JW, YOU DON'T JUST BELIEVE IN "A" GOD, YOU BELIEVE IN 3 GODS. SO ATHEISTS ACTUALLY BELIEVE IN 3 LESS GODS THAN YOU DO. THE STATEMENT WOULD MORE APPROPRIATELY APPLY TO A MUSLIM THAN TO A CHRISTIAN. AT LEAST MUSLIMS ARE MONTHEISTIC. IF CHRISTIANS ADD A FEW MORE GODS THEY'LL BE ABLE TO START THEIR OWN HOCKEY TEAM.**

**William Lane Craig addresses this statement. The person who brought up the question curiously counters Craig by saying “That’s semantics.”**

**JW, ACTUALLY, THE PERSON SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE SPECIFIC: "DISHONEST SEMANTICS."**

**Funny, considering that’s what the atheists are doing: making up semantic word games. Redefine terms to win a debate: atheism at any cost.**

**JW, YOU JUST GAVE A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE MENTAL DEFENSE MECHANISM KNOWN AS "PROJECTION." SINCE YOU CANNOT DEFEND AGAINST THE ACCUSATIONS OF USING CUNNING SEMANTIC DISTORTIONS AND REDEFINING TERMS TO WIN ARGUMENTS, YOUR ONLY OPTION IS TO THROW THE ACCUSATIONS BACK AT ATHEISTS AND HOPE THAT IT DISTRACTS PEOPLE FROM WHO IS REALLY GUILTY OF USING THOSE TACTICS.**

1. **The Statement Is Irrational**

**JW, TIME OUT.**

**YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC GHOSTS AND ALL THOSE BATSHIT CRAZY STORIES IN THE BIBLE ... AND YOU THINK YOU ARE IN A POSITION TO JUDGE RATIONALITY?**

**LISTENING TO A GHOST WORSHIPPER LECTURE ABOUT RATIONALITY MAKES ABOUT AS MUCH SENSE AS LETTING BARRY BONDS MIX YOU A POWER SHAKE.**

**As I’ve argued elsewhere, the statement is simply irrational. The atheist is literally saying that the theist is an atheist:**

**NO NUMNUTS, THAT IS NOT WHAT THE STATEMENT LITERALLY SAID. GO BACK AND READ IT AGAIN. IT ONLY LITERALLY SAYS THAT, IF YOU WHITE OUT THE PART YOU KEEP IGNORING: "TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS."**

**necessarily, for any human b, b is either theist (T) or ~T.**

**But Christians are T, therefore they are necessarily ~~T.**

**JW, LOOK CLOSELY AT THOSE 2 SENTENCES. ARE THE LETTERS B AND T NECESSARY? NO, THEY ARE NOT. NEITHER ARE YOUR TILDES. IT MAKES JUST AS MUCH SENSE TO LEAVE THEM OUT AND SAY IT IN ENGLISH.**

**YOU ARE TRYING TO ADD CREDIBILITY TO YOUR AGRUMENT BY MAKING IT APPEAR THAT YOU ARE USING LOGIC. NO MATTER HOW MANY SYMBOLS AND VARIABLES YOU THROW IN, IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOUR MISREPRESENTATION; NOR IS THERE EVEN A HINT OF LOGIC INVOLVED IN YOUR ARGUMENT.**

**In English, it is true that any human being is either an atheist or a theist.**

**NO JW, THAT IS NOT TRUE - YOU HAVE CREATED A FALSE DICHOTOMY.**

**AN AGNOSTIC (OF THE TYPE WHO BELIEVES THAT YOU CAN NEVER KNOW) IS NEITHER.**

**Christians are theists, therefore, they are necessarily not atheists.**

**JW, EXCEPT TO OTHER RELIGIONS. THEY ARE ATHEISTIC TOWARDS EVERY RELIGION EXCEPT THEIR OWN.**

**But then what the atheist is saying is that the b who is T = ~T in regards to T`, T“, etc.**

**JW, CONGRATULATIONS ON TAKING A BEGINNING LOGIC CLASS. IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU DECIDED TO USE WHAT LITTLE YOU LEARNED TO DISHONESTLY ARGUE AGAINST THOSE WITH WHOM YOU DISAGREE.**

**This is simply false, however, because the b who is T is necessarily ~~T. So the atheist is claiming that a contradiction is true.**

**JW, ONLY IF YOU IGNORE THE CRUCIAL PART OF THE STATEMENT.**

1. **The Statement Proves Too Much**

**Consider the following statement: there are a theoretically infinite number of possible answers to the equation “Two plus two,” but only one actually true answer.**

**JW, WHERE THESE STRAW MAN AGRUMENTS USUALLY FALL ON THEIR FACE IS IN THE OPENING PREMISE. YOUR GOAL IS TO GET EVERYONE TO ACCEPT YOUR PREMISE SO THAT YOU CAN THEN SLIP YOUR CONCLUSION BY THEM. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE STRAW MAN PREMISE IS ALWAYS FLAWED.**

**IN YOUR PREMISE, YOU MAKE AN ASSERTION CLAIMING AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS. THE KEY TO YOUR DECEPTION LIES IN RECOGNIZING THAT THE TERM "POSSIBLE ANSWERS" IS AMBIGUOUS.**

**To say that “Two plus two equals four” is to automatically make me an unbeliever in all the other possible answers.**

**JW, YOU JUST ADMITTED, IN EFFECT, THAT TO BE A CHRISTIAN "IS TO AUTOMATICALLY MAKE YOU AN UNBELIEVER IN ALL OTHER POSSIBLE RELIGIONS." THAT IS EXACTLY TRUE, AND, IT IS THE POINT OF THE STATEMENT ABOUT BELIEVERS BEING ATHEISTIC TOWARDS ALL OTHER RELIGIONS.**

**HOW COULD YOU FALL INTO A TRAP THAT YOU YOURSELF SET? DON'T YOU EVER THINK ANY OF THESE THINGS OUT BEFORE YOU WRITE THEM DOWN?**

**It’s not rational, however, for the atheist to say, “Well I just go one step further and choose to disbelieve that four is the answer either.”**

**JW, NOW YOU'VE COMMITTED THE LOGICAL FALLACY OF FALSE ANALOGY. YOUR ANALOGY REQUIRES THE ATHEIST TO REJECT THE ANSWER THAT HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE TRUE. REJECTION OF YOUR RELIGION WOULD ONLY BE ANALOGOUS IF CHRISTIANITY WERE TRUE. YOU CAN'T ASSUME YOUR BELIEFS ARE TRUE - YOU HAVE TO PROVE THEM LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. THAT IS CALLED "BEGGING THE QUESTION"; AND YES, IT IS YET ANOTHER LOGICAL FALLACY.**

**I HAVE NEVER IN MY LIFE SEEN ANYONE COMMIT AS MANY LOGICAL FALLACIES IN SO SHORT A TIME. BUT WHAT SAVES THIS FROM BEING A TRULY SAD AND TRAGIC SITUATION, IS THAT YOUR DELUSION THAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY ARGUING RATIONALLY ... IS PRETTY HYSTERICAL.**

**The same type of argument could be made for any true statement. Therefore, the type of reasoning employed in the “we’re all atheists” statement would undermine all true belief.**

**JW, ONCE AGAIN, YOU CUT THE STATEMENT OFF WHERE YOU NEEDED IT TO BE CUT OFF. IF YOU USED THE WHOLE STATEMENT PEOPLE COULD MORE EASILY SEE HOW YOU ARE TRYING TO MISLEAD THEM.**

**But it’s just a quip**

**In regards to my previous post on this statement, several respondents said variations of “You’re taking it too seriously, it’s just a phrase meant to inspire discussion” or “It’s just a quip”. As one respondent put it:**

**"The original formulation didn’t use the word “atheist.” It simply said, “You disbelieve in all the gods of all the religions other than your own. Well, we godless folks only disbelieve in one more than you do. We disbelieve in them all.” Stated this way, your hair splitting over the poetic use of “atheist” becomes irrelevant and the central point stands.**

**JW, SO WHEN IT IS EXPLAINED TO YOU, YOU DISMISS IT BY REFERRING TO IT AS "HAIR-SPLITTING?" BUT YOU DON'T SEE ANY HAIR-SPLITTING IN ANY OF YOUR WRITING?**

**THIS IS HOW YOU REACT WHEN YOU DON'T LIKE AN ANSWER BUT HAVE NO VALID REPLY. YOU SIMPLY RESORT TO DENIAL. THAT'S WHY IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME FOR THAT PERSON TO TRY TO REASON WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU, A PERSON WHOSE BELIEFS WERE NEVER BASED ON REASON TO BEGIN WITH.**

**But it can be seen that this falls victim to the same difficulties already pointed out above. For it could be said that “You disbelieve in all the possible answers to the statement 2+2=? except one [4], I just disbelieve in them all.” It’s simply positively irrational to even use it as a talking point. That, or it’s trivially true and therefore pointless.**

**JW, I THINK THERE SHOULD BE A LAW AGAINST GHOST WORSHIPPERS EVEN BEING ALLOWED TO USE THE WORD "RATIONAL."**

**Finally, consider the reasoning behind the statement that “it’s just a quip.”**

**Does using a phrase as a mere expression excuse it from being contradictory or false?**

**JW, HALF THE VERSES IN THE BIBLE CONTRADICT THE OTHER HALF. MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN PROVEN BY SCIENCE TO BE FALSE. OBVIOUSLY, BEING CONTRADICTORY AND FALSE IS NOT A RESTRAINT ON YOUR ABILITY TO BELIEVE.**

**Suppose I were to go around saying “atheists are theists too, they just don’t know it!”**

**JW, AFTER READING THIS ESSAY, THAT WOULDN'T ACTUALLY SURPRISE ME.**

**After all, in the Bible it says God’s existence is plain and can be easily discerned (Romans 1:18-20).**

**JW, WELL THAT'S ANOTHER VERSE THAT IS EASILY PROVEN FALSE BECAUSE THERE ARE 4.5 BILLION PEOPLE WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR GOD; SO APPARENTLY, IT'S NOT AS PLAIN AND EASILY DISCERNED AS YOU SEEM TO THINK IT IS.**

**So it follows that atheists are theists!**

**JW, REMEMBER THAT BEGINNING LOGIC CLASS THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER? WELL, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM GETTING YOUR TUITION REFUNDED; JUST SHOW THEM THIS ESSAY.**

**Obviously, if I were to use this as a “quip” or “expression” it would be seen as an insult or a jab.**

**JW, I DIDN'T TAKE IT AS EITHER ONE. IT WAS JUST MORONIC.**

**Not only that, but it would be seen as obviously false “I’m not a theist,” the atheist would respond. “But it’s just a quip!” I could reply. That doesn’t excuse it from being utterly false.**

**JW, LIKE ALL BELIEVERS, YOUR ANALOGIES AREN'T EVEN CLOSE TO BEING ANALOGOUS. IN THIS EXAMPLE YOU PRESENT A QUIP, BUT YOUR QUIP IS SIMULTANEOUSLY A CONTRADICTORY STATEMENT, SO IT DOES NOT REPRESENT A TYPICAL QUIP.**

**SINCE YOU OBVIOUSLY SLEPT THROUGH YOUR LOGIC 101 CLASS, LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MISSED: THE PURPOSE OF AN ANALOGY IS TO MAKE A COMPLEX IDEA EASIER TO UNDERSTAND. BUT RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS DO NOT USE ANALOGIES FOR THAT REASON - THEY USE THEM TO MISREPRESENT IDEAS. THE OBVIOUS DECEIT EMPLOYED IN THE USE OF ANALOGIES IS WHAT EXPOSES THE DISHONEST INTENTION OF THE RELIGOUS MIND.**

**Or again, many Hindus claim that all people are really Hindus, they just don’t know it. After all, Brahma is all, so anyone is really Brahma and part of Hinduism, whether they know it or not. But this is clearly false. I am not a Hindu. I think the concept of Brahman is self-referentially incoherent.**

**JW, BUT A MAGIC GHOST WHO IS ACTUALLY 3 GHOSTS IN ONE - YOU FIND THAT SELF-REFERENTIALLY COHERENT? HOW SILLY OF ME, OF COURSE YOU DO.**

**To assign a label to me that is false is not to make a quip, but an insult;**

**JW, GHOST WORSHIPPER IS A LABEL BUT IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE. IN FACT YOU ARE VERY PROUD TO BE A GHOST WORSHIPPER AND YOU DESPISE ANYONE WHO ISN'T, OR ANYONE WHO WORSHIPS A DIFFERENT INVISIBLE GHOST THAN YOU DO.**

**to assign a label that is incoherent is irrational.**

**ONCE AGAIN JW, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW RATIONAL IF IT KICKED YOU IN THE BALLS.**

**A Dilemma**

**I present a dilemma:**

**Those who assert the “We are all atheists” phrase are either:**

**JW, LET ME INTERRUPT. SEE HOW YOU KEEP USING ONLY THE PART OF THE STATEMENT THAT SUPPORTS YOUR MISREPRESENTATION? EVERY TIME YOU DO THAT, YOU SHOW EVERYONE WHAT DISHONESTY LOOKS LIKE.**

**1) Making an argument for atheism from the phrase, which is irrational and contradictory**

**JW, REREAD THE STATEMENT FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME. IT IS NOT MAKING AN ARGUMENT FOR ATHEISM - IT IS MAKING A STATEMENT ABOUT RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS.**

**JW, DOES YOUR FAMILY HAVE TO WATER YOU TWICE A WEEK?**

**or**

**2) Being disingenuous and actively making ad hominem jabs at theists (and therefore being irrational)**

**JW, THE STATEMENT IS NEUTRAL REGARDING "AD HOMINEM" ATTACKS. IT MERELY STATES A FACT.**

**THIS IS ANOTHER PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW DISHONEST YOU LITTLE GHOST WORSHIPPERS ARE: BOTH OF YOUR OPTIONS RESULT IN A JUDGMENT OF IRRATIONALITY. BY RIGGING THE OUTCOME, YOUR DILEMMA IS UNFALSIFIABLE, AND THEREFORE, AS USELESS AS EVERYTHING ELSE YOU'VE WRITTEN.**

**To maintain the use of this phrase is to live in a world of either irrationality or insult: either way, it is to disrespect ourself and our fellows.**

**JW, YOU ARE MANUFACTURING INSULT WHERE NONE EXISTS. DAMN, YOU ARE ONE DIM BULB.**

**NO JW, THAT WAS NOT AN AD HOMINEM. YOU NEED TO DIG OUT THOSE NOTES YOU DIDN'T TAKE WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING THROUGH YOUR LOGIC CLASS AND REVIEW THE FALLACY OF PERSONAL ATTACK (AD HOMINEM). SIMPLY MAKING AN INSULT IS NOT A LOGICAL FALLACY UNLESS IT IS USED AS AN ARGUMENT.**

**The Underlying Reasons For Making the Statement**

**In discussing this statement with atheists, I’ve found that often it is seen as a simple attempt to try to point out to Christians their “inconsistency.”**

**NO JW, THEY ARE TRYING TO POINT OUT THEIR HYPOCRISY.**

**The reasoning is that Christians use their cognitive abilities when rejecting other faiths, but they apparently don’t in regards to their own.**

**HEY JW, THAT WAS PRETTY GOOD. SUCCINCT, POWERFUL, AND ACCURATE.**

**Following from this, it is argued that if Christians were to just be as skeptical about their own faith as they were about others’, they’d be atheists too (or at least understand atheism).**

**JW, NOW YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS TRYING TO PROVE TOO MUCH. IT IS MERELY A STATEMENT OF FACT; AND ONE THAT YOU DON'T LIKE BECAUSE IT EXPOSES YOUR HYPOCRISY TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS. YOU ARE GUILTY OF THE EXACT SAME THING THAT YOU ACCUSE ATHEISTS OF, DISBELIEVING OTHER RELIGIONS, EXCEPT THAT YOU RESERVE ONE GOD FOR YOURSELF.**

**There are problems with this reasoning. The first is that it begs the question against Christianity by assuming that there are no good reasons to be a theist (i.e. if you examined Christianity, you’d reject it too).**

**JW, ATHEISM DOESN'T "ASSUME" THERE ARE NO GOOD REASONS TO BE A THEIST BECAUSE, THERE ARE NO GOOD REASONS TO BE A THEIST. THAT IS WHY YOU REQUIRE FAITH. IF THERE WERE GOOD REASONS TO BE A THEIST YOU WOULDN'T NEED FAITH.**

**There have been many who have examined Christianity and found it to be epistemologically robust;**

**JW, STRANGELY NOT ONE OF THOSE HAS BEEN A MUSLIM, OR A HINDU, OR AN ATHEIST. IN FACT, I BELIEVE ALL OF THEM HAVE BEEN CHRISTIANS. BUT WHAT AN ODD COINCIDENCE: OTHER RELIGIONS MAKE THE SAME CLAIM YOU JUST DID - AND WITH EXACTLY THE SAME AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE THAT YOU OFFER ... NONE.**

**so the reasoning of the atheist is question begging.**

**JW, THE ATHEIST DOES NOT HAVE TO BEG THE QUESTION BECAUSE THE BURDEN OF PROOF LIES WITH THE CLAIMANT. UNTIL YOU OFFER SOMETHING BETTER THAN "GOD DID IT BECAUSE THE BIBLE SAYS SO," THERE IS NO QUESTION TO BEG.**

**But it also assumes that atheism is a kind of epistemic neutral ground: if one is an atheist, he/she can examine all worldviews without bias.**

**WELL JW, THEY HAVE A POINT. CERTAINLY ONE THAT YOU CAN'T CLAIM.**

**Again, the problem is that this is false. Atheism is grounded upon the idea that “there is no God.”**

**JW, ATHEISM IS NOT GROUNDED UPON ANYTHING. ATHEISM IS THE REJECTION OF *YOUR* CLAIMS: NOTHING MORE - NOTHING LESS.**

**IF YOU WANT TO DEBATE ATHEISTS WHO CLAIM THERE IS NO GOD, BE MY GUEST. NEITHER OF YOU CAN PROVE ANYTHING, SO IT WILL BE LIKE WATCHING TWO LITTLE KIDS IN KINDERGARTEN SLAPPING EACH OTHER.**

**As such, that doesn’t make it unbiased–rather, it makes it biased against the existence of a God(s).**

**JW, THERE IS NO NEED TO BE BIASED AGAINST SOMETHING FOR WHICH THERE EXISTS NO EVIDENCE. I AM NO MORE BIASED AGAINST GOD THAN I AM AGAINST UNICORNS.**

**OH, IM SORRY. THAT WAS A PERSONAL ATTACK ON YOUR BELIEFS WASN'T IT? I FORGOT THAT YOUR BIBLE DOES MENTION UNICORNS.**

**So to assume that atheism is an unbiased viewpoint through which all religions should be viewed is to once more beg the question.**

**JW, ATHESIM *IS* UNBIASED IN THAT IT DOES NOT TAKE A POSITION OF BELIEF UNTIL SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT A BELIEF IS PRODUCED. THEREFORE, IT IS NOT ASSUMING ANY CONCLUSION AND DOES NOT "BEG THE QUESTION."**

**ACTUALLY JW, YOU MIGHT WANT TO HOLD OFF ON GETTING THAT TUITION REFUND I MENTIONED EARLIER. WHO KNOWS, IF YOU ASK NICELY, MAYBE THEY'LL EVEN LET YOU TAKE THE CLASS OVER.**

**Therefore, it appears as though we are once more left wanting any good reason to use the phrase. The statement that “we are all atheists” is false, irrational, insulting, and epistemically question begging.**

**JW, EVERY TIME YOU USE THAT HALF OF THE STATEMENT AND OMIT THE REST, THE STINK OF YOUR DISHONESTY COMES WAFTING ACROSS THE INTERNET FOR ALL TO SMELL.**

**MY SUMMARY:**

**THERE IS ONE FINAL SILVER LINING TO THIS DEPRESSING LITTLE MAN: I WAS VIEWING THE COMMENTS ON THIS ESSAY AT HIS WEB SITE AND SAW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE IS CONFRONTED BY SOMEONE WHO PUNCHES WAY ABOVE HIS WEIGHT CLASS. HERE IS WHAT HE REPLIED TO SOMEONE WHO WENT BY THE HANDLE "AN ATHEIST":**

**"Ugh, I initially approved your comment and then realized that it falls under the category of “insulting”, it doesn’t add to the discussion (your primary thesis was “if you were logical, you would agree with me”) and just plain irrelevant. I will refer you to the comment policy and ask that if you seek to get comment privileges on here again you actually construct arguments that are not composed of mere ad hominems or saying “I’m right, therefore you are wrong.” Consider your privileges suspended until the next time I see anything rational come from your comments."**

**THAT'S RIGHT, HE KICKED OFF THE ATHEIST COMMENTER FOR INSOLENCE WHEN HE COULDN'T DEAL WITH THE ANSWER. ARE YOU CURIOUS WHAT "AN ATHEIST" SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED INSULTING, IRRELEVANT, AND IRRATIONAL? WELL HERE IT IS:**

**"There is no evidence for God. The “evidence” you provided is not empirical, and thus can be dismissed. You have nothing. And you just admitted it."**

**JW IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO IS BEYOND ALL HOPE. HE WILL LIE, MISREPRESENT, AND RESORT TO ANY INTELLECTUALLY DISHONEST ARGUMENT IN HIS BAG OF TRICKS, TO PLEASE THE INVISIBLE MONSTER THAT HE BELIEVES IS MONITORING HIS EVERY THOUGHT.**

***THAT* IS THE SALVATION HIS HORRIBLE RELIGION OFFERS YOU.**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**CHIMP, BONOBO STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON THE SOCIAL BRAIN**

**IT'S BEEN A PUZZLE WHY OUR TWO CLOSEST LIVING PRIMATE RELATIVES, CHIMPANZEES AND BONOBOS, HAVE WIDELY DIFFERENT SOCIAL TRAITS, DESPITE BELONGING TO THE SAME GENUS. NOW, A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THEIR BRAINS SHOWS NEUROANATOMICAL DIFFERENCES THAT MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE BEHAVIORS, FROM THE AGGRESSION MORE TYPICAL OF CHIMPANZEES TO THE SOCIAL TOLERANCE OF BONOBOS.**

**WHAT'S REMARKABLE IS THAT THE DATA APPEARS TO MATCH WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE HUMAN BRAIN AND BEHAVIOR. THE NEURAL CIRCUITRY THAT MEDIATES ANXIETY, EMPATHY AND THE INHIBITION OF AGGRESSION IN HUMANS IS BETTER DEVELOPED IN BONOBOS THAN IN CHIMPANZEES.**

**BY CONTRIBUTING TO OUR BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF HOW BRAIN ANATOMY RELATES TO SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, THIS STUDY MAY PROVIDE CLUES TO THE BRAIN DYSFUNCTION UNDERLYING HUMAN SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS LIKE PSYCHOPATHY AND AUTISM.**

**CHIMPANZEES AND BONOBOS DIVERGED FROM A COMMON ANCESTOR WITH HUMANS ABOUT SIX MILLION YEARS AGO, AND FROM EACH OTHER JUST ONE-TO-TWO MILLION YEARS AGO. DESPITE THIS RELATIVELY BRIEF SEPARATION IN EVOLUTIONARY TERMS, THE TWO SPECIES EXHIBIT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR. COMPARED WITH CHIMPANZEES, BONOBOS ARE MORE ANXIOUS, LESS AGGRESSIVE, MORE SOCIALLY TOLERANT, MORE PLAYFUL, MORE SEXUAL AND PERHAPS MORE EMPATHIC.**

**CHIMPANZEES TEND TO RESOLVE CONFLICT BY USING AGGRESSION, WHILE BONOBOS ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE BEHAVIORAL MECHANISMS LIKE SEX AND PLAY TO DIFFUSE TENSION. THE SOCIAL BEHAVIORS OF THE TWO SPECIES MIRROR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE HUMAN POPULATION.**

**A RANGE OF IMAGING AND ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES WERE USED IN THE CHIMPANZEE-BONOBO STUDY. VOXEL-BASED MORPHOMETRY COMPARED THE GRAY MATTER IN STANDARD STRUCTURAL SCANS OF THE BRAINS. DIFFUSION TENSOR IMAGING CAPTURED THE WHITE MATTER CONNECTIONS, TO COMPARE THE FIBER TRACTS THAT "WIRE" THE BRAIN.**

**THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT BONOBOS HAVE MORE DEVELOPED CIRCUITRY FOR KEY NODES WITHIN THE LIMBIC SYSTEM, THE SO-CALLED EMOTIONAL PART OF THE BRAIN, INCLUDING THE AMYGDALA, THE HYPOTHALAMUS AND THE ANTERIOR INSULA. THE ANTERIOR INSULA AND THE AMYGDALA ARE BOTH IMPLICATED IN HUMAN EMPATHY.**

**RESEARCHERS ALSO FOUND THAT THE PATHWAY CONNECTING THE AMYGDALA AND THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX IS LARGER IN BONOBOS THAN CHIMPANZEES. WHEN OUR AMYGDALA SENSES THAT OUR ACTIONS ARE CAUSING SOMEONE ELSE DISTRESS, WE MAY USE THAT PATHWAY TO ADJUST OUR BEHAVIOR IN A PROSOCIAL DIRECTION.**

**CHIMPANZEES HAVE BETTER DEVELOPED VISUAL SYSTEM PATHWAYS, ACCORDING TO THE ANALYSIS. PREVIOUS RESEARCH HAS SUGGESTED THAT THOSE PATHWAYS ARE IMPORTANT FOR TOOL USE, A SKILL WHICH CHIMPANZEES APPEAR BETTER AT THAN BONOBOS.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**ARTHUR C. CLARKE (BIOGRAPHY PREVIOUSLY GIVEN)**

**“IT IS A TRUISM THAT ALMOST ANY SECT, CULT, OR RELIGION**

**WILL LEGISLATE ITS CREED INTO LAW**

**IF IT ACQUIRES THE POLITICAL POWER TO DO SO."**

**"RELIGION IS THE MOST MALEVOLENT OF ALL MIND VIRUSES.**

**WE SHOULD GET RID OF IT AS QUICK AS WE CAN."**

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**SEAN MCFLY (I WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE ANY INFO ON SEAN MCFLY)**

**"HOMEOPATHY IS THE IDEA**

**THAT WE JUST CURED THE WORLD OF TERRORISM**

**BY DUMPING OSAMA'S CORPSE IN THE OCEAN."**