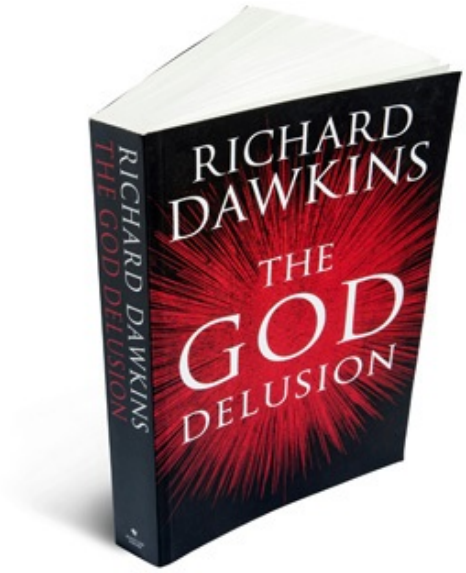
Refuting Dawkins

by Gary Kukis

Kenny, a friend of mine, recently said that people just get comfortable with what they believe and cannot get out of this space. He suggested that I read a book which challenged the things which I believe, and that he would read a book that challenged his beliefs. He knows that I believe in Jesus Christ, and take my faith quite seriously; and he has apparently believed in evolution for quite a long time, and does not believe in God. Ken had been a *Christian* for a brief time in his youth. I accepted his challenge enthusiastically, and ordered *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins the day after I returned home (the book he suggested); and suggested that he read one of Josh McDowell's books (like *A Ready Defense*).



I was going to entitle this essay, *the Dawkins Delusion,* but that is an obvious title which was snapped up 4 or 5 years ago.

Graphic from cosmos magazine.com, accessed September 30, 2014.

I have heard a great deal about this book, and have seen Dawkins on television and heard him on radio on several occasions. At no time did I hear him say some that I found to be profound, or really made me reexamine my faith, but he did seem to be reasonably intelligent, and I just assumed that the meat of his atheism would be found within his book.

Before dealing with Dawkins' book, let me get my own personal prejudices out of the way: (1) I am a born again believer in Jesus Christ. I was saved over 40 years ago, and believe strongly in the truth of the Bible. I am anything but a perfect Christian. (2) As I get older, I lean more and more toward the thought that, people believe *what they want to believe*. I don't think that it is necessarily a result of I.Q. or upbringing that Charley Brown believes what he believes (although these can be contributing factors). I think that people choose to believe what they want to believe, and simply reject things that do not fit into their belief system. So, although I believe that Kenny was mostly projecting when he said that other people (meaning me, to some degree) could not be persuaded by anything to set aside my beliefs, I do agree with him that is pretty much true of most people. (3) So, agreeing with Kenny, I don't believe that there are a lot of open-minded people out there. However, I do believe that youth is a time when more people are slightly more open to suggestion.

I would not classify myself as being open-minded.

Preface: (I will deal with my objections and discussion of Dawkins's book chapter by chapter). Dawkins begins his book with somewhat of an tribute to John Lennon's son, *Imagine...a world with no religion. Imagine no suicide bombers, no 9/11,...no Crusades...no Israeli/Palestinian wars...no shiny-suited bouffant-haired televangelist [asking for money]*.[1] There are several problems with this approach. First of all, not all religions are the same. Whereas, it is typical for there to be 5–10 acts of Muslim terrorism daily, sometimes involving beheadings, it is quite unusual to find similar acts perpetrated by Christians, Jews or Buddhists. The only thing that comes close to Muslim terrorism is acts of individuals who are mentally or emotionally disturbed who kill, and often have weird motivations explained in their weird manifestoes. About the only thing that such people have in common is their mental illness; and sometimes they indicate a grave concern for the environment. But what is done on a typical day in the name of Islam roughly matches a decade of crazies killing in theaters or schools.

Furthermore, most Islamic attacks are perpetrated on other Muslims. They may want to kill Americans, Jews and white Europeans; but mostly they kill other Muslims.

In order to get Christians into the mix, Dawkins (along with pretty much every other anti-Christian) has to talk about the Crusades. The fact that he has to reach so far back into the past suggests that perhaps Christians are not really as much of a problem as he supposes they are.

Furthermore, it ought to be pointed out that, during the crusades, very few people knew much about the Bible. The Catholic Church, for many centuries, kept the Bible out of the hands of the common man (the Reformation was all about getting the Bible into the hands of the common man). The violence and evil which was done during the crusades had a lot more to do with political power than it had to do with principles found in the Bible. People were not persecuting Jews and carrying signs that read *John 3:16*. No one in that era would have any idea what John 3:16 said.

Regarding televangelists with goofy hair styles asking for money, I guess Dawkins' may be confused about the concept of a remote. I am very serious about what I believe and I have a great deal of respect for Billy Graham and his son Franklin Graham. However, I have very little interest in people on televison asking me for money and rarely do I watch anyone who does. *Imagine no religion:* heck, just figure out how to use your remote. That actually works in the real world.

The second problem with Dawkins' approach is, he appears to assume that, remove religion, and that will remove a great deal of war and killing in the world. This is certainly implied. Personally, I disagree with a great many people about religion and about God. At no time has this made me want to harm them; I am unaware of any religious army being raised up to go get those guys with whom we disagree.

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[1]Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion;* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston; ©2006; p. 1.

Now, do I support destroying ISIS? Wholeheartedly. Does that make me some kind of irrational religious nut? I don't think so. My guess is, Dawkins and I are in agreement about this topic. Religion is a factor, obviously; but religion is not why I want to see them destroyed. Their insane actions are why I would like to see them destroyed. If there was a way to destroy all radical Muslims and let the quiet, mild Muslims live and practice their religion, I would be cool with that (as would nearly all Christians, despite the fact that we believe that they are completely wrong on matters theological).

If ISIS and other radical Muslim groups stopped their behavior of killing innocents, and began teaching against this. If the Palestinians decided to throw out Hamas and to do everything possible to get along with the Jews, I think that a great many wars and conflicts would end almost instantly. It is not because of religion; it is because of Islam, which is an evil religion.

In case you think that I am just prejudiced against Muslims, and speak against them because I am a Christian, that is wrong. If you believe this about me, there are two excellent websites that you need to visit regularly until the truth of the evil of Islam sinks in: (1) www.thereligionofpeace.com and (2) www.warsintheworld.com The first website keeps an hourly tally of every Islam attack throughout the world. It is an eye-opening website. You do not realize how often these attacks are occurring because there is very little news about it. The average person probably thinks that there is an act of violence by Muslims every few days or weeks. They don't realize that these acts of violence occur every few hours; and that it would be easy to do an hour news report every night on this topic alone. The second website shows where war is actually occurring. Again, the average person is completely unaware of how many wars are going on right now. If you were to ask Charley Brown, he might say, 3 or 4. If he watches the news, he might guess as many as 10. However, on any given day, there are about 50–60 wars going on in the world. Where are most of these wars occurring? In Muslim countries between rival Muslim factions or with Muslims trying to wipe out Christians. A distant second would be wars involving communism and socialism, which, let me remind you, are economic systems which are, in part, based upon atheism. There are not a lot of wars involving Christians trying to force their faith upon others or televangelists trying to get a bigger share of the market by conquering a country or two for their god.

Thirdly, Dawkins ignores the source of most killing in the world: godless communism. This is an economic system which rejects God, often persecutes religion, and makes everything subservient to the state (actually, to those in charge of the state). Not on are Mao and Stalin the two greatest killers of the 20th century (and possibly of all time); but communism is known for killing more people in peacetime than are usually killed in war (communists generally do kill more in war than during peacetime, but the numbers who die because of communism during peacetime is phenomenal).

Which bothers me the most? A televangelist that I won't ever watch or communists who will kill in the millions in order to impose their godless economic system?

Less important points raised in the introduction are people who are religious because of childhood indoctrination and *being an theist...is something to be proud of*.[2] There are a huge number of people who come to believe in Jesus Christ as young adults. Although I went to a number of churches, I never fully understood Who Jesus Christ is. I believed at age 21; and many other people have also believed. Atheists seem to make a big issue out of childhood indoctrination. Our schools are filled with indoctrination. We have people graduating high school today who read and write at a 6th grade level, but are really concerned that global warming is destroying the planet and polar bears as well. That is anything but education.

Secondly, Dawkins wants atheists to be proud—but of what philanthropic organizations does he speak? He wants atheists to be proud because this *nearly always indicates a healthy independent of mind*—which, quite frankly, is a pretty self-centered reason for pride. But how many atheist organizations have a world-wide reputation for feeding the poor or visiting the sick or healing the sick? There must be some, but I don't know of any. However, I can name many Christian organizations (or organizations founded by Christians), as can you. What do we think about when we think about atheist organizations? Lawsuits against schools, churches and small businesses. These are lawsuits that they do not have to win—all they need to do is intimidate or force their opponents to near bankruptcy. Somehow, if I was an atheist, this would not make me swell with pride.

Continuing with the introduction: Dawkins warns of the riskiness of making fun of religion. I cannot think of the last anti-Christian art piece, play, movie or television show where anyone's lives were at risk. In some cases, people might have complained about these artistic endeavors—some may have promised not to go see them. But people poke fun at Christianity all the time without serious repercussions.

There is a very telling statement in the introduction of *The God Delusion: organizing atheists has been compared to herding cats, because they tend to think independently and will not conform to authority*.[3] Religion involves authority. We answer to a Higher Power. We Christians are anything but perfect, but we recognize that there is someone with authority over us. Does Dawkins not tip his hand here somewhat? Maybe people are atheists not because they are brilliant and have overcome childhood brainwashing; maybe they are atheists because they simply do not like authority over them. Maybe there is more choice in their unbelief than conviction or reason?

Near the end of his introduction, Dawkins hopes that religious readers who read his book will become atheists. Well, so far, in this introduction, I have seen very little which strikes me as being profound. I see a man cherry-picking information, and drawing unwarranted conclusions. That does not tend to convince me.

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[2]Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion;* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston; ©2006; p. 3.

[3]Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion;* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston; ©2006; pp. 4–5.

He claims that there are *dire warnings* against opening a book like his. Now, quite frankly, in my Christian life, I have been fairly sheltered. I have not heard anyone warn me against reading Dawkins' book. I have seen and heard a number of television and radio shows which have featured Dawkins with hosts who clearly have a religious bend—all of them have given the name of Dawkins and his book several times during the broadcast; and all have allowed Dawkins to have his say. So if there are dire warnings against me reading this book, I somehow missed them.

Richard Dawkins has been featured several times on the Michael Medved show; Medved is a Jewish conservative with real religious leanings. Photo from ytimg.com accessed September 30, 2014.

Rarely as a Christian have I heard other Christians tell me to set aside my mind and just believe; and to ignore the arguments of those who are anti-Christian.

One final remark on the introduction. When talking about the presumed affects that his book will have on the reader, Dawkins says, *I believe there are plenty of open-minded people out there: people whose childhood indoctrination was not too insidious, or for other reasons didn't 'take', or whose native intelligence is strong enough to overcome it*.[4] Quite frankly, I find this approach somewhat offensive. If I am smart enough, I might get it. If my childhood indoctrination was not too insidious, I might get it. I take the implication that, if his book does not move me to become an atheist, then apparently I am not smart enough or I am too well-indoctrinated. That's just insulting.

I will add to this work as I read further into the book.

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[4]Richard Dawkins *The God Delusion;* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston; ©2006; p. 6.