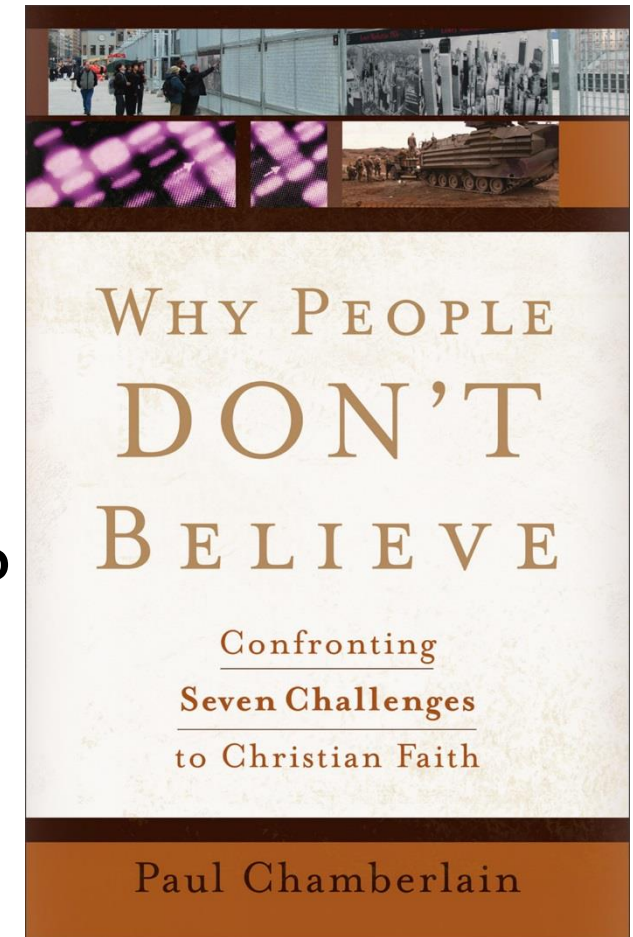


Impact Hour

January 31, 2016

Why People Don't Believe:

1. The Power of Religion
2. Reason To Fear
3. Religion and Violence: A Closer Look
4. Is Christianity Irrational and Devoid of Evidence?
5. Is Christianity Anti-Scientific?
6. Is Biblical Morality Appalling?
7. Living the Way Jesus Calls Us to Live
8. Christianity's Gifts to the World
9. Is There a Way Forward? True Religion



Two Areas of Need:

- The need for people of faith to hear and truly understand the concerns and challenges raised against religion
- The need to engage in thoughtful and frank dialogue with those who raise such objections

Three Aims of The Book:

- **Accurately** represent the concerns and challenges raised against religious faith, particularly those against Christianity
- Respond to those challenges
- Examine the many good and humane contributions Christianity has made to the world throughout the past two thousand years

“when these allegations are laid out in greater detail and Christians begin to catch a glimpse of the message and passion of the critics, they are usually shocked and bewildered.”

Paul Chamberlain

Why People Don't Believe, p.13

Reason to Fear

1. Religion breeds violence
2. Religion is irrational and lacks evidence for its claims
3. Religion is anti-scientific
4. Biblical morality is appalling and promotes violence
5. Religious teaching of an afterlife is scandalous and dangerous
6. Religion engenders intolerance and exclusivity
7. Religion leads believers to impose religious teachings on others

Charge 1: Religion Breeds Violence

Christopher Hitchens:

“The main source of hatred in the world is religion.”

Richard Dawkins:

The Jewish and Christian revelation had become “the most bloody religion that ever existed.”

John Adams

Charge 1: Religion Breeds Violence

New critics cite:

- September 11
- Suicide bombings
- Violent acts against abortion clinics
- Andrea Yates (mother who drowned her five children to protect them from Satan)
- Inquisition

Charge 1: Religion Breeds Violence

- Jews vs. Muslims (Palestine)
- Orthodox Serbians vs. Catholic Croats (Balkans)
- Protestants vs. Catholics (Northern Ireland)
- Muslims vs. Hindus (Kashmir)
- Muslims vs. Christians (Sudan)
- Muslims vs. Christians (Nigeria)

Charge 2: Religion is Irrational and Lacks Evidence for its Claims

Religion gets people to believe stunningly irrational things for which there is no evidence

Dawkins:

- we usually know the difference between what is rational and what is not.
- when we come across an irrational idea, we either reject it outright or enjoy it as good fiction
- religious people believe ideas that are irrational

Charge 2: Religion is Irrational and Lacks Evidence for its Claims

- Lack of evidence is no obstacle, not testable
- Religious beliefs are not merely academic or theoretical
- No way to determine superiority/inferiority of religious beliefs
- Impervious to debate/discussion
- Glorify unquestionable obedience
- Not just peripheral, extend to core beliefs

Charge 2: Religion is Irrational and Lacks Evidence for its Claims

Dawkins:

Athanasian Creed: The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

This is **OBVIOUSLY IRRATIONAL!**

Charge 2: Religion is Irrational and Lacks Evidence for its Claims

THE VERY EXISTANCE OF GOD

Harris: How is our understanding of the universe advanced by believing in a creator who communicates through a one-way process of revelation?

Charge 2: Religion is Irrational and Lacks Evidence for its Claims

THE VERY EXISTANCE OF GOD

Dawkins:

- Belief in the existence of God should be seen as a scientific hypothesis
- Discoverable in principle, if not in practice
- Thomas Aquinas' five ways of proving God's existence
- Believers have a deep hostility toward evidence
- Believers shift burden of proof to atheists
- God's existence is not provable

Charge 3: Religion Is Anti-Scientific

Science: firm, reliable way of acquiring knowledge about our world

Religion: constant enemy of knowledge, discovery, progress

Charge 3: Religion Is Anti-Scientific

Dawkins:

- Truth is in a holy book
- Book is true
- If evidence contradicts book, throw out evidence

Charge 3: Religion Is Anti-Scientific

Harris:

- “Science represents our most committed efforts to verify that our statements about the world are true, or at least not false.”
- Religious beliefs are “beyond the scope of rational discourse”
- Religious beliefs “float entirely free of reason and evidence”
- Religions offer “no valid mechanism by which their core beliefs can be tested and revised”

Charge 3: Religion Is Anti-Scientific

Dawkins:

- puzzled and “baffled” at some scientists’ “belief in the details of the Christian religion: resurrection, forgiveness of sins and all”
- They don’t mean what they say

Reason to Fear

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