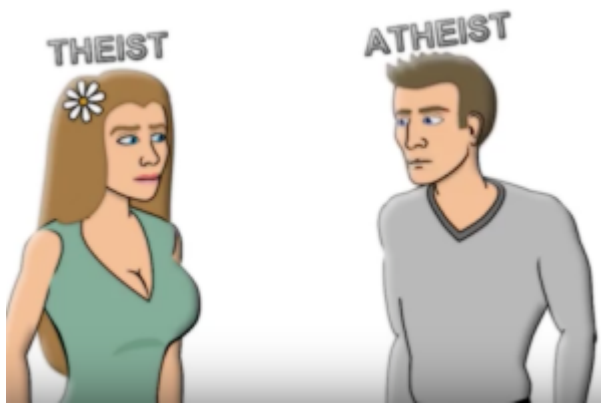


Do You Know God?



This video is making the rounds on Facebook. Watch the video and then I'll discuss below. You can skip the last couple of minutes which is promoting a skeptic's website. Or not. Your call.

https://youtu.be/P0A_iF1B3k0

Okay, it's pretty funny. I especially get a kick out of the Pentecostal guy speaking in tongues. It's set up as The Atheist versus the Theists. The atheist is human. The other guys are religious. The implication is that their religion is blinding them to the fact that what unites them all is that they are all humans first. The theists include a bunch of different kinds of Christians, and then some other faith groups. The atheist is the rational guy, the religious guys are superstitious bozos.

What interests me is that this video pursues the same strategy as other popular contemporary atheists like Richard Dawkins. You aim your criticism at traditional religious believers. What's not mentioned is that what unites all the believers, from whatever denomination and whatever faith is that each is expressing a level of religious intelligence called Traditional or in Spiral Dynamics, "Truth Force". G_d reveals the Truth. We better accept the truth, or else. And, of course, sometimes this is backed up by a warrior consciousness, which is humorously depicted in the video. (Not so funny in real life).

The cluster of values, assumptions about the nature of reality, and importantly *how* we think about the problems that beset us, trump particular religious ideologies.

The video would never work if you set the atheist up against a theist like Catholic theologian, John Haught, or a panentheist process theologian, like John Haught. Or biologist and theist, Rupert Sheldrake. Each of these men believe in God but have transcended, yet included, the modernist rationalism of the atheist.

So, it's a cheap shot. It wants us to believe that if the theists would just put down their religion all the problems of the world would be solved and we could get on with just being Human.

The corollary is that rational humans are the answer to world peace. Are we to believe that non-theistic, rational modernists, like Mao Tse Tung, Lenin, Vladimir Putin are the answer to world peace? Or the scientists that developed nuclear weapons? Karen Armstrong has done a good job at exploding the belief that the violence of the last century was primarily religiously motivated. It was motivated by politics, and rationalist politicians. Also this:

In their comprehensive Encyclopedia of Wars, Phillips and Axelrod document the recorded history of warfare. Of the 1,763 wars presented, a mere 7% involved a religious cause. When Islam is subtracted from the equation, that number drops to 3.2%.

In terms of casualties, religious wars account for only 2% of all people killed by warfare. This pales in comparison to the number of people who have been killed by secular dictators in the 20th century alone.

Here's an evolutionary take on religion:

Religion as Truth Force becomes a religion *about* its leader and founder.

Religion as Modernist Rationalist (often atheist) becomes a

historical and contextual deconstruction of that religion's doctrines and beliefs.

Religion as Postmodernist Empathic becomes an enactment of justice and inclusivity. It's not what you believe, but how you act in the world.

Religion as Integral becomes an identification with animating intelligence and love of the religion's founder. You become that which was animating your religion's founder—a mystic. ("It is no longer me, but Christ in me"). The significance and deep meaning of the tradition comes back on line, along with a trans-rational appreciation, even devotion for, the founder of the lineage.

My point here is that as religious intelligence continues to evolve, we become more and more human. Religion can be humanizing if it is allowed to evolve. The video assumes that all religion got frozen at the Traditional stage of development.

It also assumes that an evidence-based, mathematical worldview is what transforms us from religious fools and fanatics into human beings. That was the hope of modernism certainly. What it did do was to add a new epistemology (how we get at truth)—one that is rational and empirical. Which is in itself good.

But then modernism is contextualized by postmodernism (which the atheist guy expresses when he says that all truth is contextual and perspectival). So there arises yet a more nuanced view of "truth", yet another epistemology.

Postmodernism itself is contextualized by yet a more nuanced perspective on truth, one that can embrace all of these truths — of animism, traditionalism, modernism, postmodernism. Call this integral.

My point is that to be Human you can't stop at modernist rationalism. To be human is to continue to evolve. My other point is that there are expressions of theism that reflect

traditional, modernist, postmodernist and integral intelligence. The video is successful in pointing out the shortcomings and potential violence of a traditionalist religious worldview. But religion itself is not the problem. It's religion (and rationalists) who refuse to evolve.