

# **What a Secular Humanist Wants Christians to Know**

**Presented**

**to**

**SaddleBrooke Freethinkers**


**November 13, 2016**

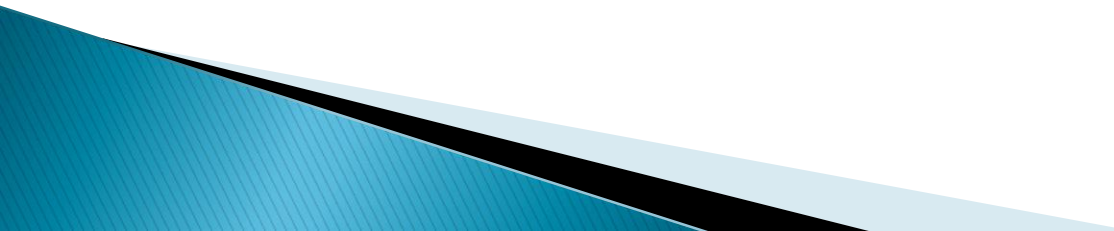
**by**

**Gil Shapiro**


**Spokesman, Freethought Arizona**

# Some housekeeping:


- ▶ This talk was originally to go about 40 min. Due to the election I will need about 60 minutes. I'm, however, giving you very important information...now vital for the secular community to know.
  - ▶ But, to move this along, I will bring out my inner New Yorker.
  - ▶ Q&A to follow
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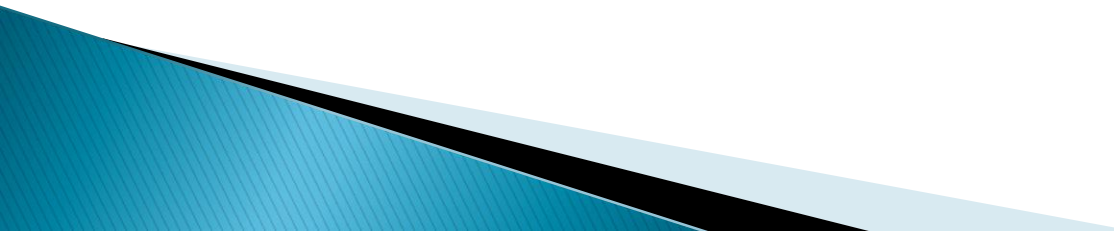
- ▶ Let me know if it is too hot/too cold
  - ▶ If I'm too loud/too soft;
  - ▶ The slides are my text.
  - ▶ So, **lean in and buckle up.**
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# Why this talk?

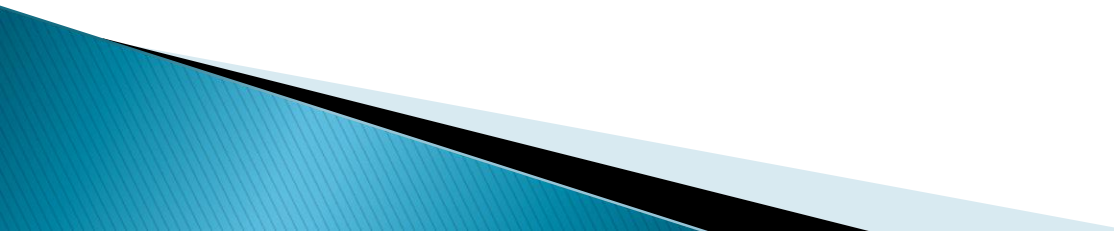
- ▶ I was requested to give it by Dan Grossenbach, an instructor in Christian apologetics at the Catalina Foothills Church (an evangelical/fundamentalist church) in Tucson.
  - ▶ He wanted me to explain to his class both secular humanism and my thoughts about Christianity.
  - ▶ I gave much of the presentation you are about to hear on August 14. He responded to it at the church on August 21. It was a fascinating and “spirited” exchange! Always respectful.
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# The goals for Dan and me and the groups we represent are...

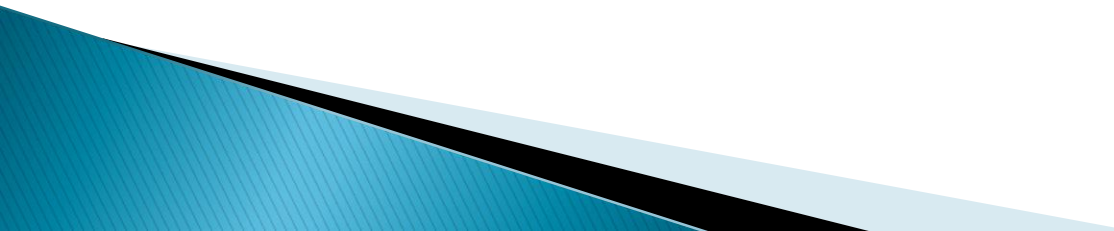
- ▶ to explain and gain a better understanding of “the other side’s” worldview.
  - ▶ to define the issues we all face in our society
  - ▶ to learn how to negotiate, compromise and admit to “irreconcilable differences” as we work to find solutions
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- ▶ Dan was invited to give the counter presentation (What a Christian Wants Secular Humanists to Know) to Freethought Arizona on Nov. 27. 10am.
  - ▶ At DuVal Auditorium at Banner UMC.
  - ▶ He agreed instead to a debate/discussion/Q&A on the question:
  - ▶ Does Christianity Best Explain Reality?
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# Why am I presenting this talk to you?

- ▶ As I reflected on my 8/14 talk, I realized that its content is also vital for secular humanists to know.
  - ▶ It will cite our positions and give arguments to use defending it.
  - ▶ And now with our new government secular thinking will be under attack.
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# As of Nov. 8 our new reality is...

- ▶ The Christian influence in the Executive branch, the Republican dominated Congress, and in SCOTUS will inevitably further polarize conservative Christians and secularists.
  - ▶ Our government will primarily use faith-based thinking rather than reason-based thinking for the laws and policies they want to enact.
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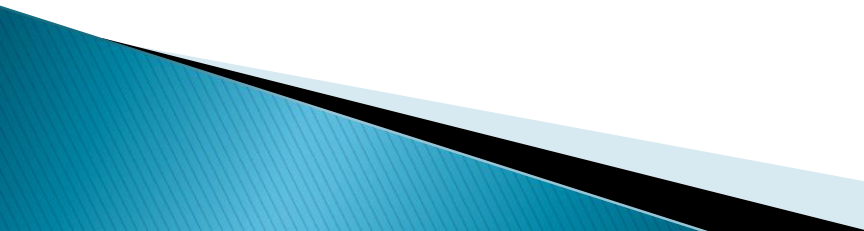
From Eddie Tabash, (Constitutional lawyer)  
Board Chairman, Center for Inquiry

- ▶ *We are concerned that Christianity will be used as an excuse if not a weapon to limit and deny many Americans their Constitutional rights.*

# *President Trump will replace Scalia with a conservative then...*

- ▶ *he will probably have the opportunity to nominate **at least two more Supreme Court Justices.** Many observers expect he will replace Justice Anthony Kennedy, now age 80, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, now 83.*
- ▶ *In each case, by appointing very conservative Justices, **President Trump will radically alter the direction of the Court for decades to come.***

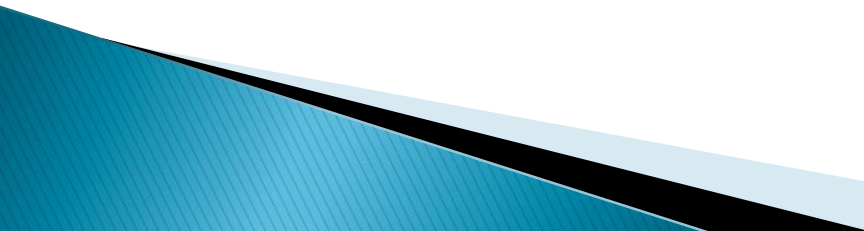
# *Why?*


- ▶ *Justice Anthony Kennedy, a perennial “swing vote” on the Roberts Court, often took laudable positions in church-state decisions, and in fact authored the trilogy of decisions that moved lesbians and gays from facing imprisonment for expressing their love to being able to marry in every state of the nation.*
  - ▶ *For her part, Ginsburg has been one of the Court’s leading civil libertarian voices.*
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*A U.S. Supreme Court remolded by President Trump would likely hand down highly adverse rulings that might include:*

- ▶ *Declaring that the First Amendment's religion clauses forbid only discrimination among religions and denominations, but allow such discrimination between the religious and the non-religious – **establishing explicitly that atheists, secular humanists, and other nonreligious Americans are second-class citizens.***

- ▶ *The late Justice Scalia once held that “The principle that government cannot favor religion over irreligion is demonstrably false.”*
- ▶ *Imagine a Supreme Court packed with Justices who share this intolerant – and wrong! – view of what the Constitution provides.*

- ▶ *Overturing Roe v. Wade, ending – or at least further obstructing – women’s access to safe, legal abortion. (And don’t be surprised if there’s a follow-on effort to restrict contraception.)*
  - ▶ *Legitimizing voucher schemes and other efforts to steer billions in taxpayer funds toward religious schools.*
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- ▶ *Expanding the distribution of public funds to religious charities that can use those funds to discriminate in hiring, and/or indirectly fund explicitly religious services.*
  - ▶ *Overturning the Johnson Amendment, which bars tax-exempt institutions including churches from endorsing political candidates.*
- 

- ▶ *Approval of a wide range of religious exemptions from health-care and other laws.*
  - ▶ *Curtailling the fundamental rights to freedom of speech and the press as Americans have known them for generations.*
  - ▶ *Turning back hard-won victories in marriage equality, LGBTQ rights, and even pay equity between men and women.*
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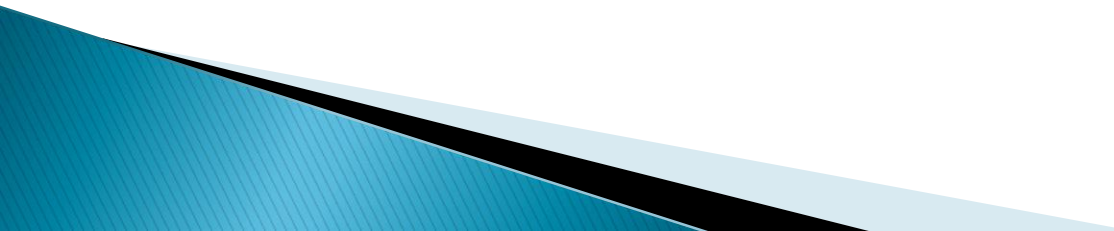
*Appalling as this may sound, this is only the beginning of the devastation a Trump presidency might herald.*

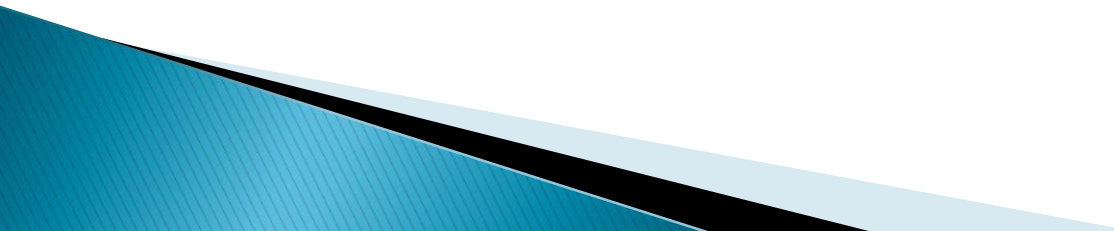
- ▶ *Under Trump, **America will likely withdraw from the campaign against climate change** that it was only just beginning to lead. While that might guarantee our grandchildren a marginally livable world, it may trap **their** grandchildren in a hellish ecosystem swirling toward irrevocable collapse.*

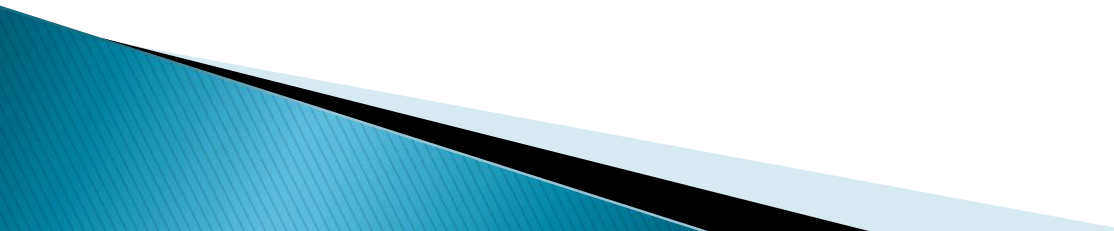
- ▶ *There is no reason to suspect that a Trump Administration would be at all friendly toward the public **understanding of science**, let alone **evolutionary theory** (a particular target of Vice President-elect Mike Pence).*

▶ That said,.....


# Dan wanted the SH understanding of these topics:

- ▶ 1) Does Reason Lead to Belief in God?
  - ▶ 2) Does God Probably Exist?
  - ▶ 3) Is God the Best Explanation for Objective Moral Values?
  - ▶ 4) Is the Bible Reliable in What it Claims?
  - ▶ 5) Is Biblical Faith Compatible with Rational Inquiry?
  - ▶ 6) Can a Perfectly Good and Loving God Allow Evil and Human Suffering?
  - ▶ 7) Can we Know about the Historical Jesus...
  - ▶
- 

- ▶ While I do not speak for all secular humanists I will advance and justify the most common positions my group holds on many of the topics Dan suggested.
  - ▶ To accomplish this, because time is limited, I will primarily focus on differences in the way Christians and SHs deal with beliefs and factual knowledge.
  - ▶ In other words:
  - ▶ ***“How do we know what we know and how do we know what we don’t know?”***
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- ▶ I will make the case that the SH basis for decision making—reason-based thinking—is superior to believers' faith-based thinking.
  - ▶ In our Q&A to follow please challenge me on my presentation and feel free to bring up new topics for discussion now or in possible future get together.
  - ▶ In that regard, please hold questions and comments for the Q&A to follow.
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# What do I want you to take away?

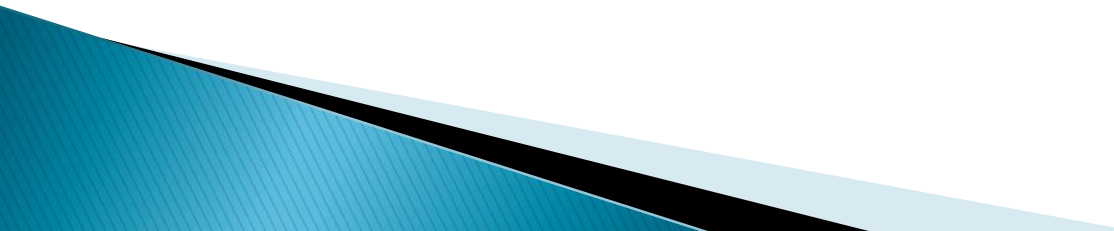
- ▶ 1) ...a better understanding of secular humanism and why many are choosing to follow its principles rather than those of Christianity.
  - ▶ 2) ...that reason-based thinking gives us factual knowledge...which is better than faith-based thinking which gives us only beliefs.
  - ▶ 3) ...that secular humanists and Christians can talk to each and seek solutions to common problems but *only* if we use a common *secular* language.
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4 ...that the religious should not seek to impose on our pluralistic society views derived from their dogma or doctrine.


5) ...to make the case that secularism is the only reliable means of preserving public order and freedom for all.




# Definitions!

- ▶ A big problem to overcome when groups like ours meet is what words mean.
  - ▶ We will get nowhere unless we all agree on definitions of commonly used words.
  - ▶ So, please forgive the emphasis on definitions but you will see the benefits as I make the case for SH and as we have post talk discussions.
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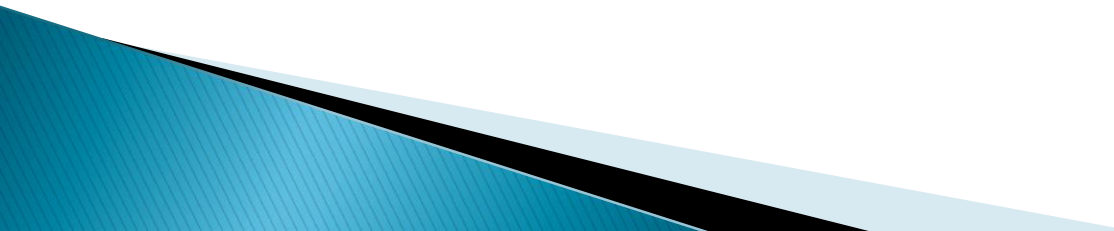
## What is secular humanism or secularism?

- ▶ **Secular** means...“Pertaining to the world or to things not spiritual or sacred.”
  - ▶ Therefore, secular humanism is a political/ethical philosophy, not a religious one.
  - ▶ It is not equivalent to atheism!
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# Secularism

- ▶ **Secularism:** coined in 1841 to mean “the extension of freethought in ethics.”
  - ▶ “...to seek human improvement without reference to religion but exclusively by human reason, science and social organization.”
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# **Secularism, for the our purposes today, should be understood as the view that**

- ▶ government should not involve itself with religious matters.
  - ▶ religious doctrine should play no role in shaping public policy.
  - ▶ religious language (God, Jesus, angels, the devil, sin, heaven, hell, etc.) is inappropriate and confusing in discussions and debates about public policy.
  - ▶ religious institutions and beliefs should not enjoy a privileged position in society.
  
  - ▶ To be discussed.
- 

To repeat: Secularism is not atheism

*Atheism* is the rejection  
of belief in a god or  
gods...period!

# Secularism is *not* agnosticism

*Agnosticism* is the claim that the existence of any deity is unknown\* or unknowable\*\*.

To mean:

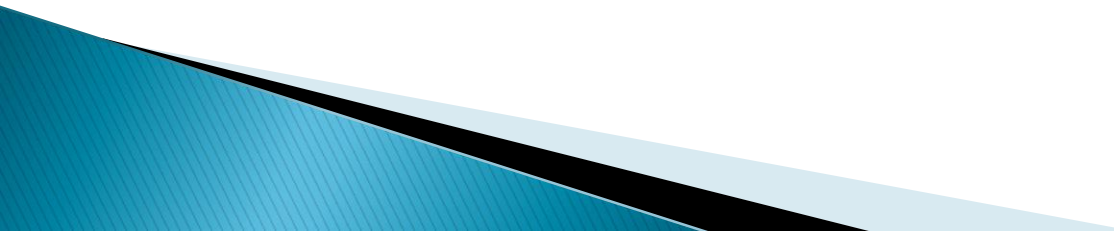
\*Human knowledge is either incapable of knowing if there is a deity. (The same way goldfish do not know Beyoncé exists.)

AND/OR,

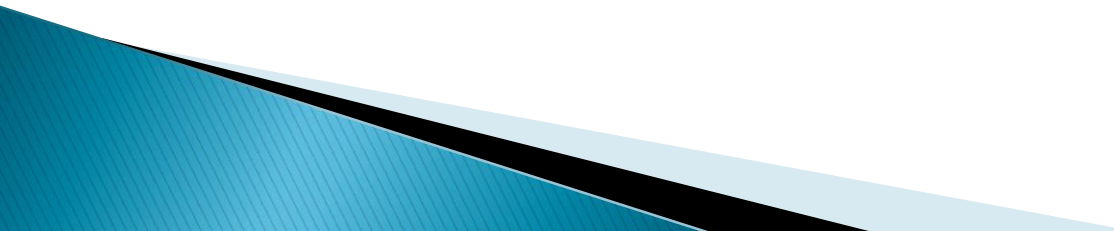
\*\*The existence of a deity is per se unknowable.



Atheism and agnosticism  
are both claims or  
perhaps positions about  
the ultimate nature of  
reality.



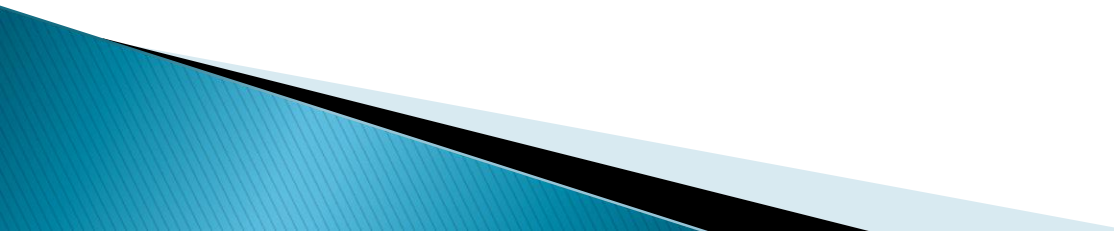
It is about...

- ▶ 1) Why is there something rather than nothing?
  - ▶ 2) What is it all about?
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# Humanism

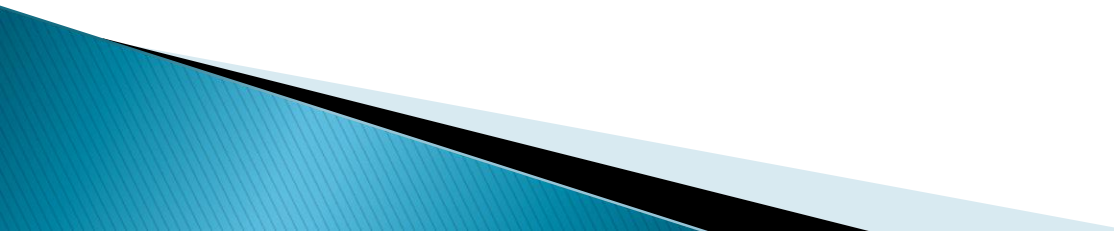
## Humanism...

- ▶ “...a democratic and ethical life stance which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives.
  - ▶ It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other *natural* values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities.”
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# Secular humanism...

- ▶ “The application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and the solving of human problems.”
- ▶ “While the faithful place their lives at the supposed goodwill of a theoretical supreme being, we secular humanists are forced to rely on each other. Accordingly, we are required to have ***trust*** in each other—which is actually the most noble of virtues.”
- ▶ \*\*\*Not faith, but *trust*.

# What is religion?

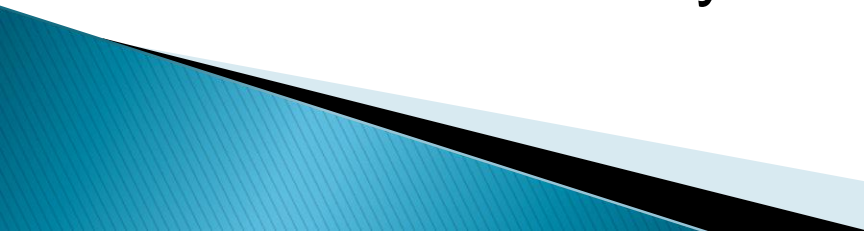
- ▶ Multiple definitions... but the one which I will use today is...
  - ▶ “a life stance involving actions that include and result from, at minimum, the firm belief in the existence and fundamental importance of a realm transcending that of ordinary experience.”
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# A fact about one's religion that to many may be very uncomfortable:

- ▶ If you were born in Saudi Arabia of Muslim parents you would most likely believe in Islam, convinced Allah's Word in the Koran was authoritative and truthful.
- ▶ If you were born in India you would most likely be a Hindu...and so on.

Here is why:

Children are (most often) “indoctrinated” to their parents' religion. Therefore, religion is most often an **IMPOSED** belief system. It is subjective.



# Indoctrinate

- ▶ 1.to instruct in a doctrine, principle, ideology, etc., especially to imbue with a specific partisan or biased belief or point of view.
- ▶ 2.to teach or inculcate.
- ▶ 3.to imbue with learning.
  
- ▶ **Simple Definition of *doctrine***
- ▶ : a set of ideas or beliefs that are taught or believed to be true

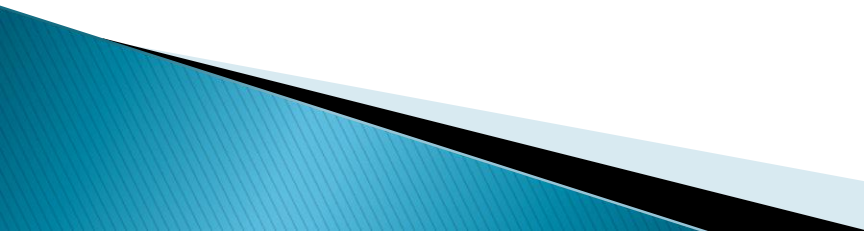
## Christians should recognize this difference...

- ▶ Teaching belief as fact is **indoctrination**.
- ▶ Teaching fact as fact is **EDUCATION**.
- ▶ BTW: Our camp does not teach secular humanism as fact but as a worldview/philosophy/life stance to consider as the most useful one to live by.

# The key point secular humanists want Christians to know is...


- ▶ that SHs hold reason-based thinking (that produces factual knowledge) rather than faith-based thinking (that produces only beliefs) as the best way to explain and better understand our reality.

# Bottom line:

- ▶ Reason, not faith, gives us knowledge of the knowable universe. And, as far as we can tell, we live in a knowable universe.
  - ▶ Faith can only give us “knowledge of the unknowable” Huh? (ie: cosmic origins, if meaning and purpose are divinely given, the afterlife etc.)
  - ▶ To wit: In a knowable universe reason is sufficient to provide knowledge. Faith is therefore unnecessary.
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## We value factual knowledge over beliefs.

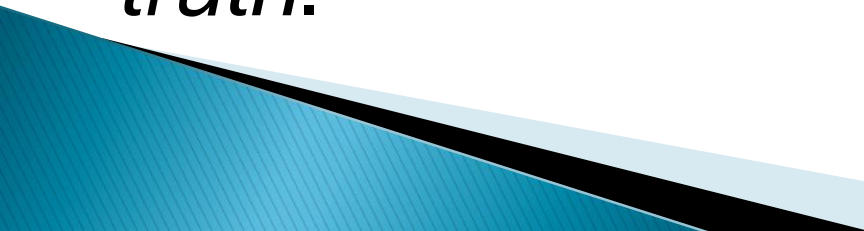
- ▶ ...**beliefs** (fixed ideas that lack certainty) are poor substitutes for **factual knowledge** (justified true beliefs or true statements about reality).
  - ▶ ....**faith** (belief in the absence of or in spite of facts/evidence to the contrary) cannot give us factual knowledge.
  - ▶ Faith is an impostor: It is not what it appears to be and doesn't deliver what it promises.
- 

# Why value factual knowledge?

A person having *factual knowledge* has a “justified affirmation of something.”

He then has an accurate (or at least a better) understanding of reality.

*Factual knowledge* is as close as humans can come to possessing a *certainty* or a *truth*.



# How do secular humanists turn beliefs into factual knowledge?

...because we all start with beliefs.

Secular humanists *trust* reason-based thinking (ex: the scientific method) because it has proven itself to provide factual knowledge:

**Observation**→**Hypothesis/Belief**→**Testing**→**Conclusion**

(But, a conclusion is always open to change if new facts are known.)

Reason, science and experience = **Naturalism.**



# The Christian approach is...

to start with a presupposition or conclusion ***it is not entitled to.***

That a...

**Deity** (whose existence has yet to be established)

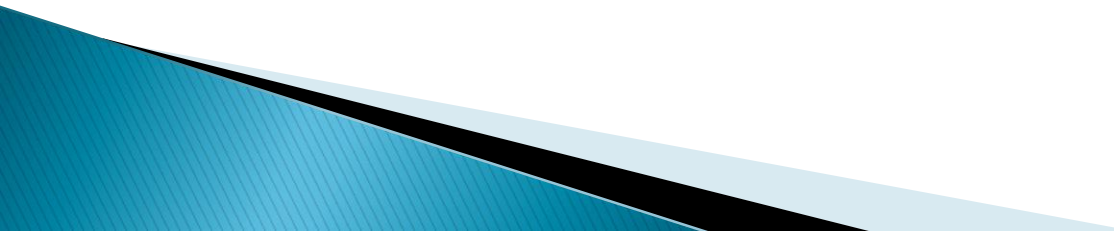
→ **Revelation** (subjective, hearsay)

→ **Scripture** (no original documents)

# The Christian conclusion:

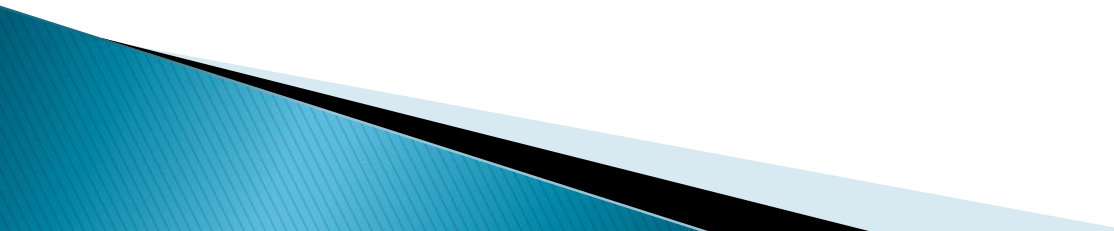
(Working backwards) Scripture is authoritative because the Revelation is inerrant (without error) because the Deity is infallible (incapable of error).

This illogical method, at best, can only produce beliefs, not factual knowledge... because it starts with “a fact not in evidence.” ...a confirmed specific deity.




## A result of faith-based thinking:

If the scripture provides no reliable internal mechanism to verify (self-check) that its pronouncements and observations about reality are correct, and dismisses outside/objective confirmation of the same...then on what basis could Christianity claim “it is the *true* religion” and all others are false?



# What is “reason?” (The foundation of science)

- ▶ *the power of the mind to think and understand in a logical way.*
  - ▶ *specifically, the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in orderly rational ways*
  - ▶ *the proper exercise of the mind*
  - ▶ *the sum of the intellectual powers*
- 

# The secular humanist position is that:

- ▶ SHs hold **reason-based thinking** as the correct way to think because its conclusions are explanatory, testable, reproducible, and falsifiable. It can make predictions. They have survived the best rational criticisms. They can be changed if warranted by new evidence/facts.

Reason-based thinking is  
**TRUSTWORTHY!**





# What evidence confirms reason-based thinking is correct thinking?

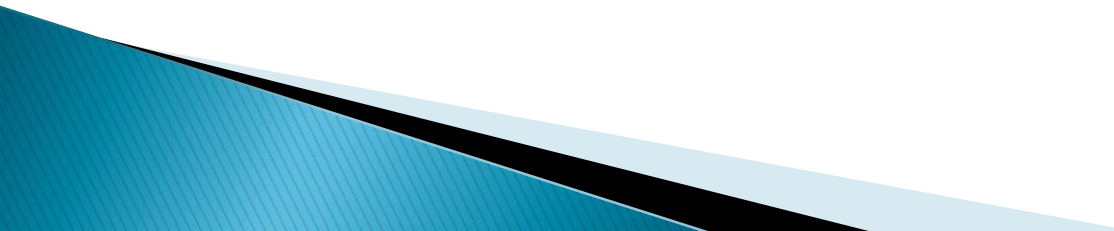
It has *proven* to be the correct pathway to factual knowledge. It is what science is built on.

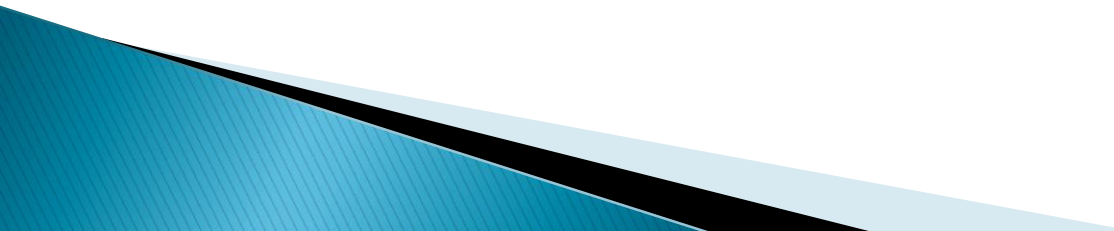
It has brought us all the trappings of modernity: medicine, engineering, agriculture, cars/planes/trains, roads/bridges/tunnels etc.

**IT WORKS!**

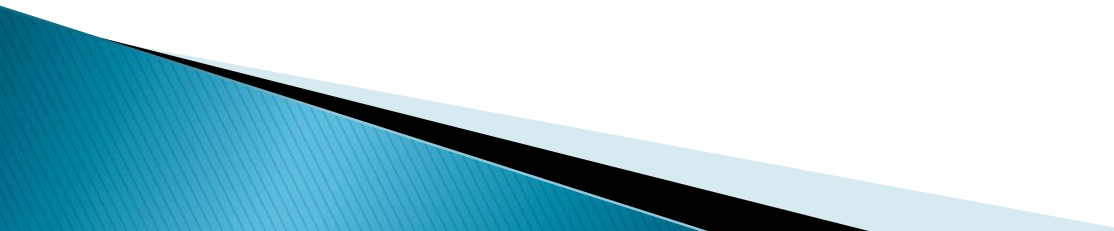
\*Nations which have the highest living standard and which self-report as the happiest are based on the factual knowledge. ie: secularism

# But.....


- ▶ Reason-based thinking unfortunately sometimes gives us information about our reality that is often troubling, depressing and downright scary.
  - ▶ (The earth is doomed; life has no God-given meaning or purpose; the universe is exquisitely indifferent to all that exists, there is no heaven...or hell (yea!) etc.)
- 


- ▶ But, secular humanists accept these conclusions as the way the “cards are dealt” in our lives, on earth, and in our universe.
  - ▶ “It is what it is...” (And, it takes guts and maturity to realize that!)
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# And...

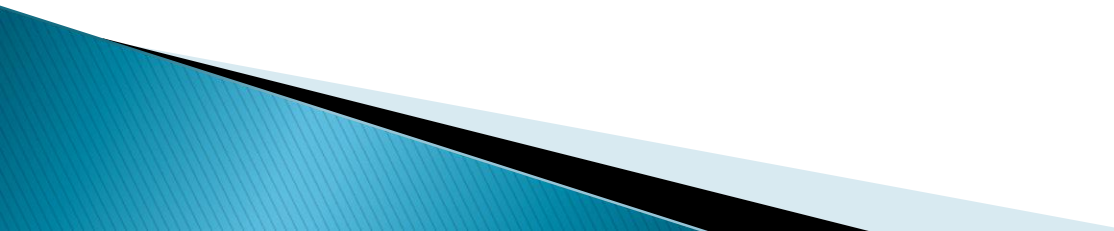
- ▶ We refuse let emotions, the by product of faith-based thinking, override rationality.
  - ▶ We refuse to let the fear and guilt of supposed divine retribution override rationality.
  - ▶ We refuse to believe the unbelievable, the highly improbable or miracles unless there is just cause to do so. (Chicago Cubs and election of Donald Trump so noted!)
- 

# Some SH positions:

- ▶ We value this life because there is no evidence we will exist in any form after our deaths.
  - ▶ We try to infuse this life with meaning and purpose that is self-generated.
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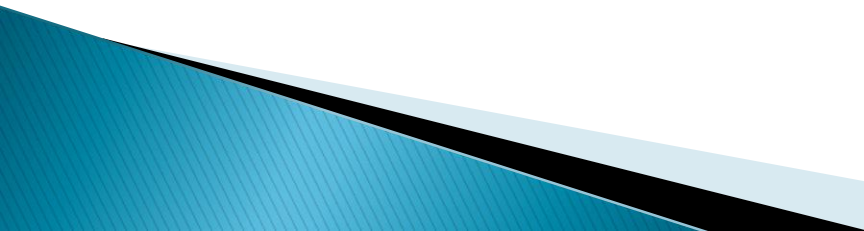
- ▶ We reject the Christian belief that we are born sinners, assumed to live sinful lives and need repentance for a supposed salvation.
  - ▶ We reject as *immoral* anyone dying in order to absolve/forgive another's bad behavior. All must be accountable and pay the price for their actions.
- 

# Specifically: The crucifixion/resurrection

- ▶ While being very sensitive to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as the core event in and the basis for faith in Christianity, we reject the notion and glorification of vicarious redemption or substitutionary atonement.
  - ▶ Question: Is it moral to believe that your sins can be forgiven by the punishment of another person?
- 

# What else can reason-based thinking help us do?

It can help us decide:

- ▶ ...whether a *personal* deity even exists.
  - ▶ ...how to think about personal and societal issues such as abortion/contraception, end-of-life matters, the education of our children, gay rights, the extent and boundary of religious liberty etc.
- 



To emphasize:

## **Our camps have different starting points**

**Christians'** starting point is a *conclusion*(!).

- ▶ (Ex: Jesus is Lord and the Bible is His inerrant and infallible Word.)


**Secular humanists'** starting position is wherever the evidence leads.

- ▶ (Ex: The Scientific Method:
- ▶ Observation → Hypothesis → Testing → Conclusion)

# Whether personal deity exists...

is a subject reason-based thinking (science) should be able to answer.

Because the influence of the supernatural (a deity's influence) on the natural world *should be* detectable by science.



- ▶ To date, however, science has not detected a supernatural realm that is the precondition for deities, demons, angels, spirits etc.

# Specifically...

Miracles, events caused by deities that defy natural laws, could be observed and studied by science *if* they indeed occurred.

To date there has never been a scientifically verified supernatural event....EVER! (again, sorry Cubs/Trump fans!)

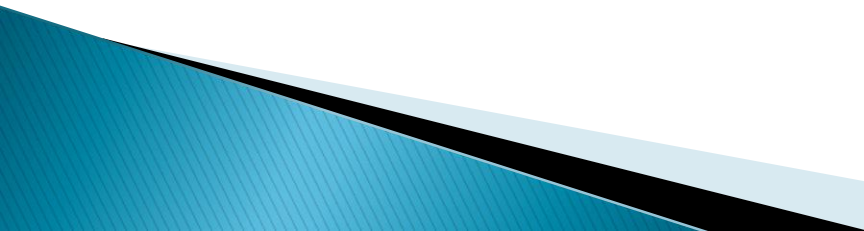
# *A miracle is an event not explicable by natural or scientific laws.*

- ▶ Remarkable, awesome, inexplicable, exquisitely or **infinitesimally** improbable do not count as miracles.
- ▶ **Informally**, the word "miracle" is often used to characterize any beneficial event that is statistically unlikely but not contrary to the laws of nature, such as surviving a natural disaster, or simply a "wonderful" occurrence, regardless of likelihood, such as a birth.

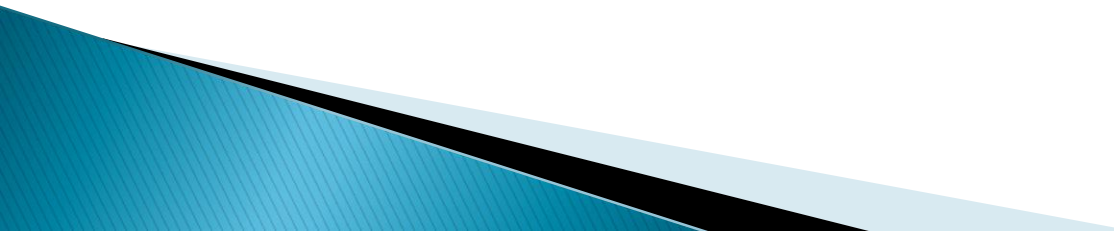
**Here's a conclusion based on common sense**

- ▶ **If the world works exactly as expected if there were no God or gods (and it does) then what rationale is there for belief in IT, Him or Them?**

**Baseline: If there is no evidence for a supernatural realm then...**

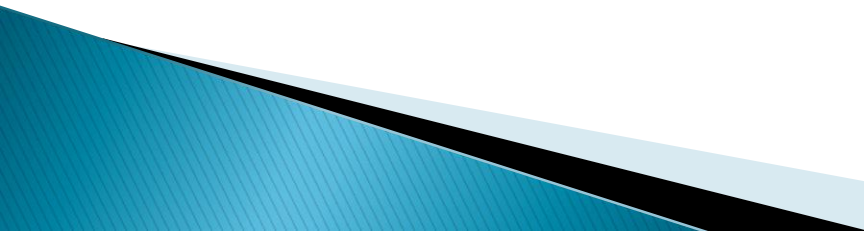
- ▶ ...it is probable a “personal” deity does not exist.
  - ▶ The consequence: Like it or not, humans are in this world alone...a fact we have to accept and deal with.
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# SH want Christians to know that we use reason-based thinking...

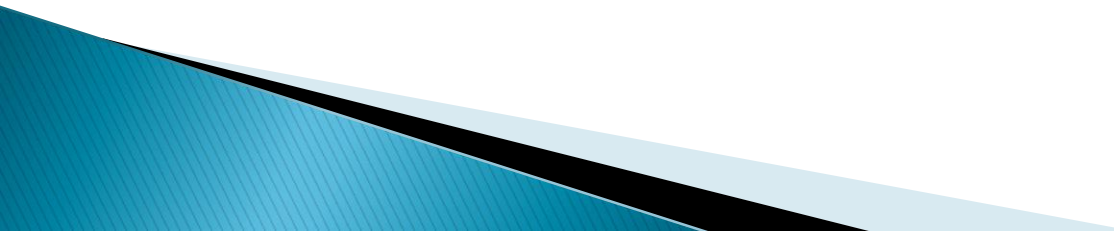
- ▶ to decide whether the other justifications advanced for Christianity are credible.
  - ▶ A common justification advanced by Christians is the supposed reliability of a foundational holy text (ie: the Bible)
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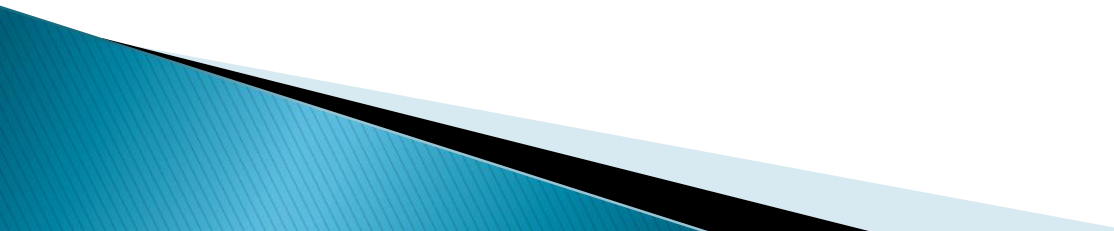


# **But secular humanists question the authority/reliability of the Bible.**

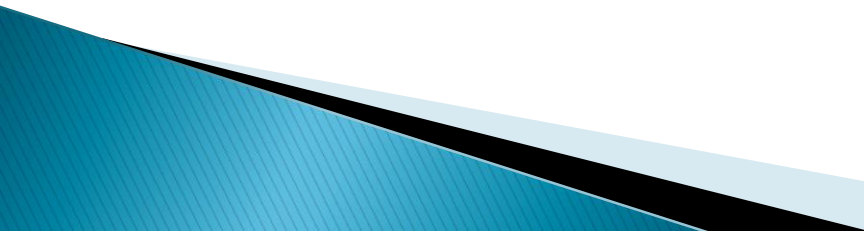
- ▶ Most scholars conclude the Old Testament was written by many authors, primarily between 600BC to 700BC describing events over 1000 to 3000 years prior to its writing.
  - ▶ **Reliable?** (revelation, hearsay, original texts)
- 

# ...and the New Testament

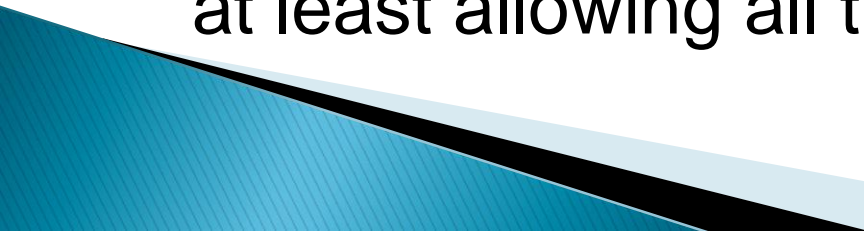
- ▶ None of the New Testament writers (who wrote in Greek) had first hand knowledge of Jesus (who spoke Aramaic).
  - ▶ They wrote their Gospels at least 40-70 years after Jesus' death based on hearsay and revelation at best.
  - ▶ Paul letters never indicated he knew Jesus.
- 

- ▶ No original texts have ever been discovered.
  - ▶ No unbiased contemporary historians during Jesus' life wrote of this man who supposedly amazed the masses. Reliable?
- 


# Verifying biblical claims...

- ▶ The Bible makes historical and scientific claims that can be verified:
  - ▶ Unbiased historians have not confirmed its many historical claims: the Exodus, the existence of a man named Jesus, miracles, etc.
  - ▶ Unbiased scientists have not confirmed its many scientific claims: animals can talk, men can live inside whales, dead people can be brought back to life etc.
- 

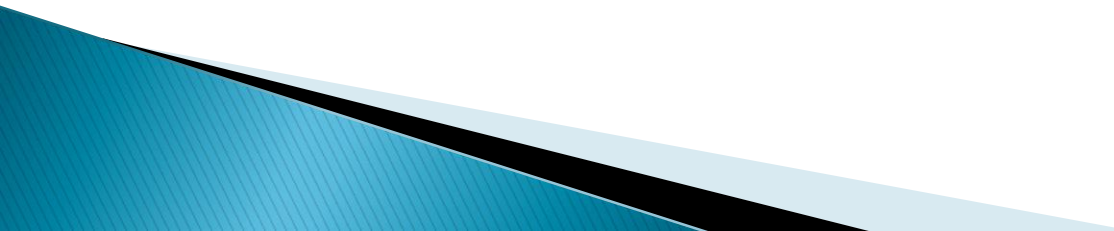
# Secular humanists note that evil and suffering are inconsistent with...

- ▶ the attributes of an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-just, ever-present, and loving/merciful deity.
  - ▶ Over 25,000 children die horribly every day from treatable diseases. Many people are doomed by disease or injury to lead lives in pain and desperation.
  - ▶ Could such a God be responsible for causing, or at least allowing all this misery to occur?
- 

# Excuses, excuses... They are:

- ▶ “We all deserve suffering because we are all sinners;”
  - ▶ “We don’t know God’s ultimate purpose;”
  - ▶ “We live in a speck of time compared to an eternity in heaven;”
  - ▶ The “Free Will” defenses
  - ▶ **are all unimpressive and insulting to human intelligence.**
- 

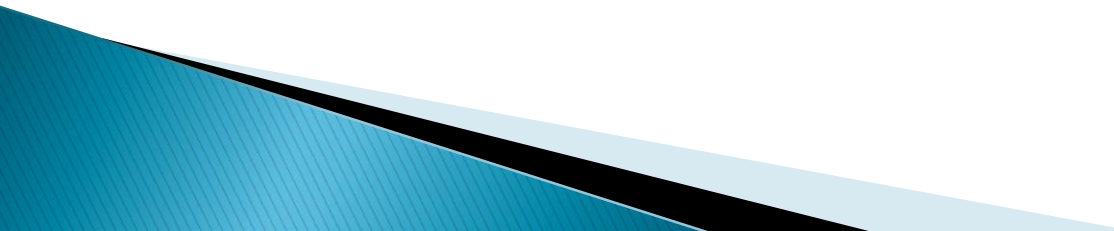
# SHs reject divinely infused meaning and purpose...

- ▶ What meaning and purpose are there for the lives of supposedly ensouled embryos that are miscarried (naturally aborted) at a rate estimated over 40% along with those thousands of children who die every day?
  - ▶ For the infants left to roast to death in hot cars?
  - ▶ For the thousands of babies born with the severe physical and mental impairments from the Zika virus?
- 

# **SHs reject “objective /absolute morality.”**

This kind of morality doesn't exist. And, if it did it would be unnecessary because except for fanatics, it is not followed.

Sociological and anthropological research have confirmed (for years now) that our morality is a product of our biology and culture. It predates the Abrahamic religions by thousands of years.





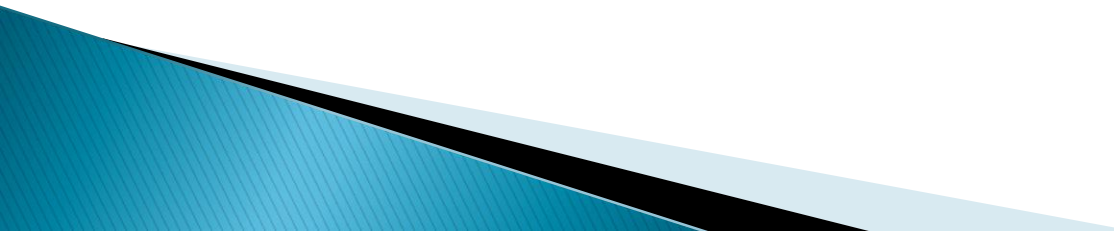
# The proof:

Most Jews, Muslims and Christians routinely override their God's directives because they **know** their *humanly* derived morals are superior.

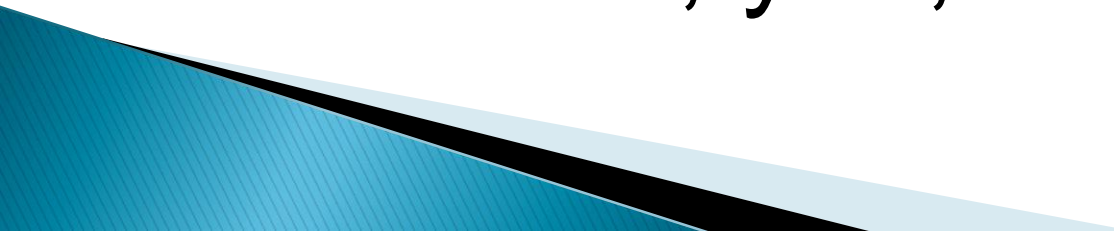
Most all believers reject divine directives to commit murder, genocide, terrorism, enslave fellow humans and torture, rape, and destroy families.

- ▶ **Bottom line: Gods do not make (most of) us do things we know “inside” are not right to do.**

# Secular humanist ethics and morality

- ▶ Rational ethics and morality are based on human experience.
  - ▶ They are consequentialist: Ethical and moral choices are judged by their results. ie: Do they promote individual and/or group well-being?
  - ▶ Almost all humans share core “common moral decencies.”
- 

# FACTS:


- ▶ Religion is not the basis for morality ...*never was, never will be!*
  - ▶ Morality has always been independent of religion and is based on, yes, secularism.
- 

# Secular humanists want Christians to know that:

While we respect your right to believe anything you want, we are concerned about teaching children that:

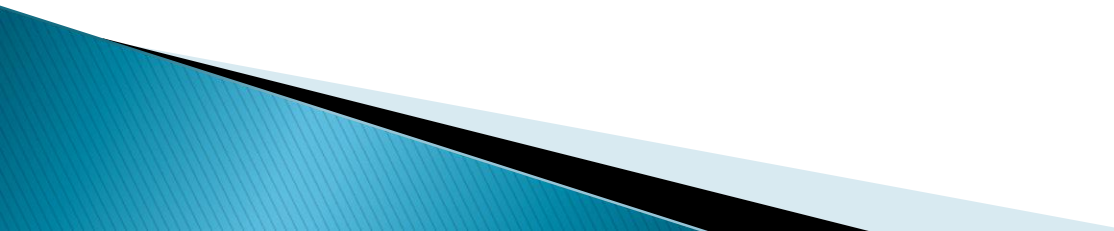
...highly implausible and dubious ideas are to be believed as fact and require no further investigation.

...that scientific truths such as evolution are denied.  
(You can't not believe a fact; and wishing it weren't so, doesn't make it not so!)



**In the SH view, it is improper for Christians to teach that...**

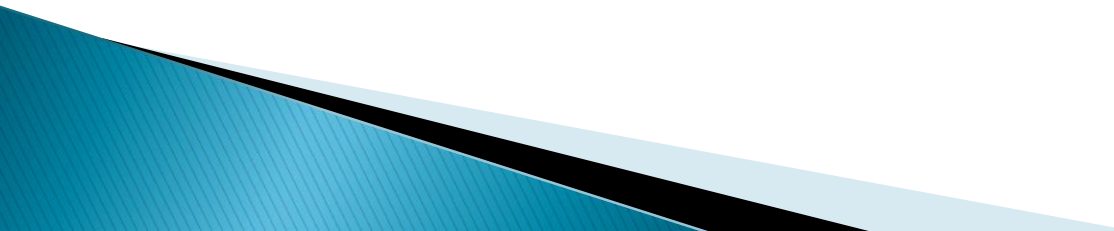
...skepticism, doubt, and freethought are to be discouraged, considered “sinful” (a uniquely religious term) and subject to divine (and possibly parental, church, social and peer) punishment or shunning.



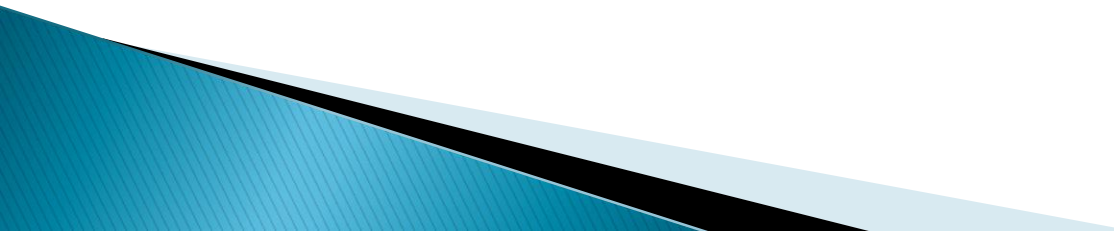
SHs cannot understand Christians' *lack of curiosity* and an apparent *inability to change thinking* based on new evidence.

Unlike SHs who are always open to change or to modify positions based on compelling new evidence, we are dismayed that...

- ▶ Christians take the position that their faith is *irrevocable* and cannot be changed or modified under any circumstances.

- ▶ How do otherwise intelligent people justify this intransigence?
  - ▶ Indeed, how can resistance to change be justified with all we know in this 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- 

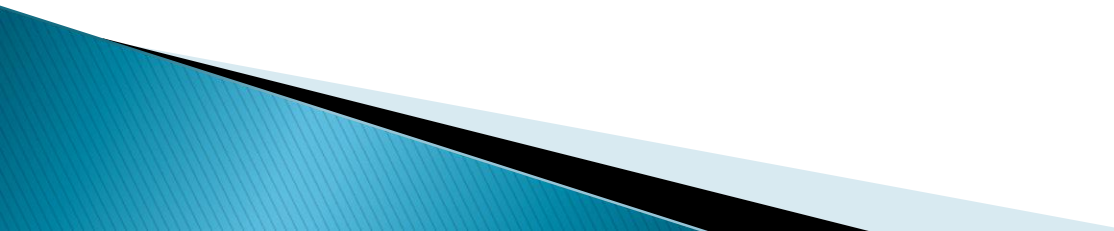
# For example...

- ▶ *\*The creationist (Intelligent Design) explanations about our universe and life on it are incorrect.*
  - ▶ This statement can be easily confirmed by scientists at the U of A....just down the road.
  - ▶ How many clergymen who teach this myth have asked to meet with these scientists in order to confirm their faith-based understanding of our origins?
- 

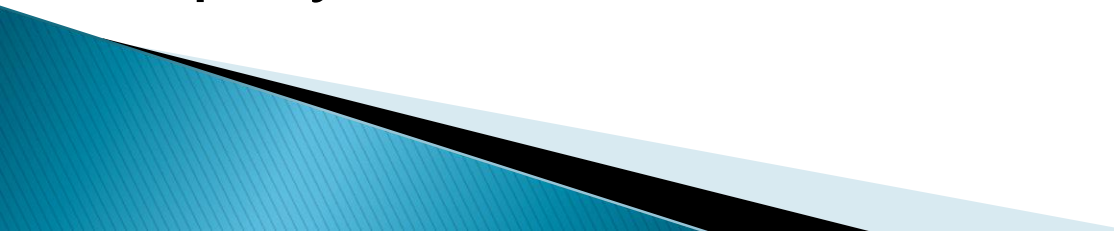


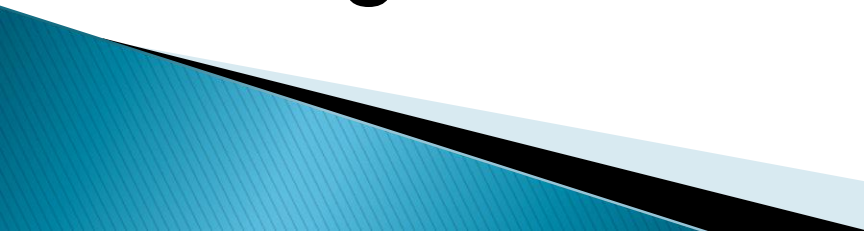
**We are troubled (but resigned to the fact) that religion is emotion driven rather than fact driven.**

We know that...

- ▶ “[I]t is very hard to reason someone out of something not reasoned into in the first place.”
  - ▶ Fear, guilt and loss of loving relationships are strong emotions that often drive and maintain attachment to religions.
- 

# Please understand...

- ▶ While secular humanists accept and respect Christians' *right* to hold certain beliefs, we want them to accept and respect *our right* to reject and even at times disrespect pronouncements such as:
    - ▶ creationism is true, homosexuality is abnormal, abstinence education works, prayers are answered etc.
- 

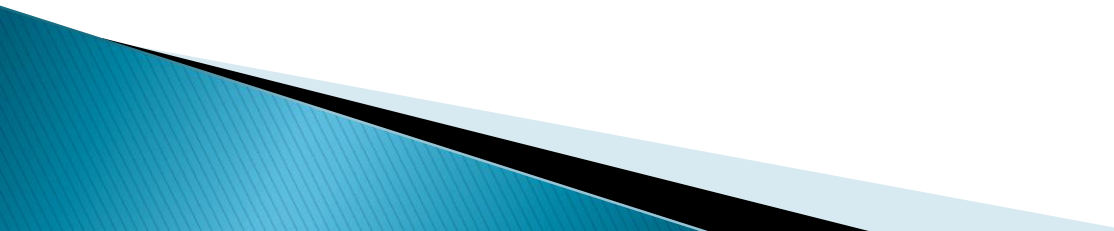
- ▶ These beliefs are indisputably incorrect. That so many Christians still cling to these falsehoods continues to flabbergast as well as infuriate us... especially because they are taught to children.
- 

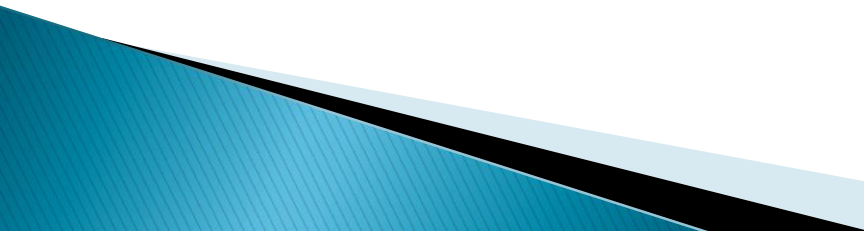
# Please understand...

- ▶ In a pluralistic society of Christians and secularists governed by a secular Constitution, ***you have rights but your beliefs do not\****.

- ▶ *\*All beliefs must compete for acceptance in the public marketplace of rational ideas.*

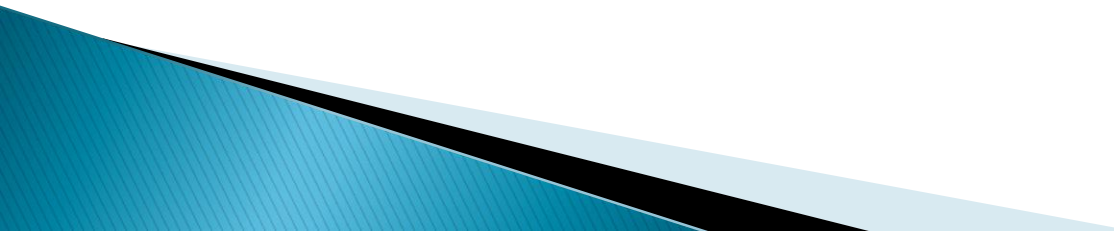
# Areas of disagreement between SHs and Christians:

- ▶ Separation of religion and government
  - ▶ Homosexuality and gay rights
  - ▶ Abortion/birth control
  - ▶ End-of-Life issues: PA e-o-l mgt/Euthanasia
  - ▶ Education (homeschooling, creationism/evolution, sex-education, prayer in school etc.)
- 

- ▶ Tax benefits for houses of worship and clergy.
  - ▶ Employment restricted to only people who share the faith.
  - ▶ Religious liberty/freedom
- 


**For example, religious liberty is a two-way street.**

It is unacceptable, unworkable and frankly not neighborly to not provide services to the public because you (ex: county clerks, pharmacists, bakers, etc.) disapprove of certain behaviors (ex: homosexuality, same-sex marriage, contraception etc).




All must be served. If one feels differently then work elsewhere!

You would not accept SHs not serving *you* because we do not approve of *your* actions, behaviors or lifestyle(!)





# SHs would prefer to see...

- ▶ Christians not trying to impose their view of the world and their guidelines for living in a pluralistic and secularly governed society.
  - ▶ Christians actively seeking out dialogue with non-believers so we better understand our respective positions.  
(Thanks Dan!)
- 

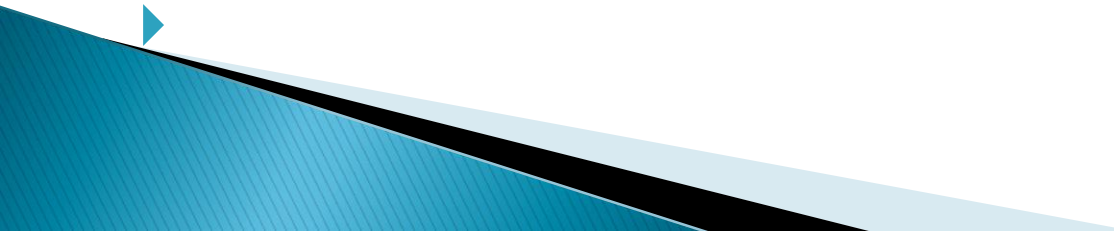
## **Ironic fact:**

Secularism, properly understood, is the best protection the religious have, especially in a society they do not and should not control.

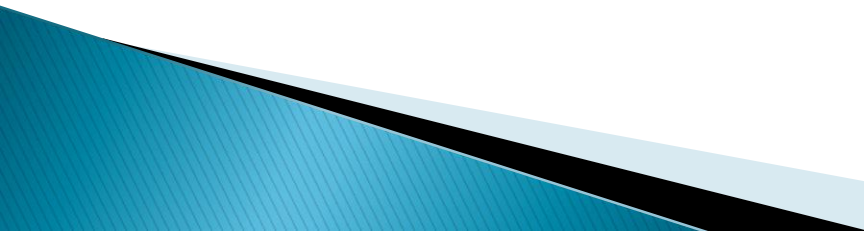
Secularism protects freedom of conscience, including freedom of religion. It doesn't threaten it.



# From Edward Tabash, CFI

- ▶ ***The general public must be exposed to arguments against the existence of any supernatural being, any God or gods.***
  - ▶ ***An intellectually mature society must be able to handle arguments against even the most treasured and revered belief systems.***
- 

# In conclusion...

- ▶ Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain a part of secular humanism and some things I would like Christians to know.
  - ▶ Recommendation:
  - ▶ Google: **The Affirmations of Secular Humanism**  
by Paul Kurtz.
  - ▶ Read: **The Necessity of Secularism**  
by Ronald A. Lindsay
  - ▶
- 

▶ Now let's talk...