

**DO YOU BELIEVE?**  
A BOOK SERIES FROM RATIO CHRISTI

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**ARE YOU THE  
IMAGE OF GOD  
OR A COSMIC  
ACCIDENT?**

*HOW THE VALUE OF HUMAN  
LIFE POINTS TO GOD*

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RICHARD WEIKART, PhD

 RATIO  
CHRISTI

**FAITH & REASON** are at odds in our culture. For many, faith has come to mean little more than wishful thinking and blind belief. Such a concept is completely foreign to the pages of Scripture and historical Christianity. As Edward Feser notes, “In short, reason tells us that there is a God and that he has revealed such-and-such a truth; faith is then a matter of believing what reason has shown God to have revealed. In that sense faith is not only not at odds with reason but is grounded in reason.”

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## INTRODUCTION

Are you the image of God or a cosmic accident? This is one of the most important questions facing each one of us. The Judeo-Christian tradition teaches, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27) If we have been created in the image of God, as the Judeo-Christian tradition proclaims, then human lives have meaning, purpose, and value. We have an eternal destiny.

The United States Declaration of Independence reflects this position when it states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Being created in the image of God implies that humans are equally valuable and have rights. They also have the moral responsibility to love other people.

If, on the other hand, we are merely the product of a cosmic accident, as many secular thinkers in our time proclaim, then our lives are meaningless and purposeless in the larger scheme of things. (I am using the term “secular” in this work to include both atheists and agnostics). From this perspective, we are temporary beings lacking any transcendent moral significance, and our lives will soon be snuffed out. Indeed, if the universe continues long enough, the sun will explode into a fiery supernova that extinguishes all life on our planet.

In his best-selling book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, the historian Yuval Noah Harari explicitly contrasts his own secular approach with the ideas enshrined in the United States Declaration of Independence. According to Harari, “the idea that all humans are equal is also a myth.” Further, he states, “According to the science of biology, people were not ‘created.’ They have evolved. And they certainly did not evolve to be ‘equal.’” He then correctly explains that Americans got the idea of human equality from Christianity. However, he considers this notion of human equality misguided, because, according to him, “Evolution is based on difference, not equality. . . . ‘Created equal’ should therefore be translated into ‘evolved differently.’”

What are the implications of this? Harari does not leave us guessing: “Just as people were never created, neither, according to the science of biology, is there a ‘Creator’ who

‘endows’ them with anything. There is only a blind evolutionary process, devoid of any purpose, leading to the birth of individuals. . . . Equally there are no such things as rights in biology.” So, based on his secular worldview Harari vigorously dismisses any idea of human equality, human rights, or a purpose to life.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between viewing humans as created in the image of God or seeing humans as a cosmic accident is not merely theoretical. It has profound practical implications. It influences the way we act toward others, as well as how we treat ourselves. It has ramifications for some of the most contentious bioethical debates of our day, including abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. Moreover, believing that humans are created in the image of God has motivated people to amazing acts of compassion. As I shall explain in greater depth at the end of this booklet, however, belief that humans are a cosmic accident has resulted in some of the most notorious episodes of mass murder in human history.

# THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE IMPLIES THE EXISTENCE OF A CREATOR GOD

In the ensuing discussion, I intend to provide overwhelming evidence for the following philosophical proposition:

**PREMISE 1:** If God does not exist, then human life has no intrinsic value, transcendent meaning, purpose, or objective moral significance.

**PREMISE 2:** Human life has intrinsic value, transcendent meaning, purpose, and objective moral significance.

**CONCLUSION:** Therefore, God exists.

Logically this is pretty straightforward. However, the truth of the conclusion is obviously dependent on the truth of the two premises. So, why do I think the two premises are sound?

## Premise 1: The Implications of Atheism for the Value of Human Life

Premise 1 is, as far as I can tell, uncontroversial. If God does not exist, then humans are the product of mindless natural processes that have no purpose or goal. Thus, it is hard to see what could possibly endow human life with intrinsic value, transcendent meaning, purpose, or objective moral significance.

I should note that I have heard some secularists, such as evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne, object to the claim that atheism robs human life of value, meaning and purpose. Coyne insists that this is mistaken, because we as humans give our own lives purpose and meaning. However, Coyne's objection is misguided, because he is using the terms 'purpose' and 'meaning' in a different way from most people who are asking questions about the purpose and meaning of life. Most people discussing the purpose and meaning of life are referring to purposes and meanings that are outside of themselves, not ones they themselves devise. That is why I use the terms "intrinsic value" and "transcendent meaning."

This reflects the meaning of the terms as they are usually used by people discussing the meaning and purpose of life.

To clarify further, by “intrinsic value” I do not mean value that is created by the being in question, in this case humans. Rather, it refers to value that is based on the nature of the being itself. Humans have intrinsic value, in the Christian view, because of how God created them (in his image), not because we happen to ascribe value to humans. Human life thus has value whether or not we think that it does. Here is an example to make this clear: iron has intrinsic value, based on what it is, not just based on subjective considerations. A one hundred dollar bill, on the other hand, does not have intrinsic value (except as a piece of paper).

Many prominent atheist thinkers acknowledge that—if their worldview is correct—human life has no overarching meaning or purpose. Jean-Paul Sartre, a prominent French existentialist philosopher in the mid-twentieth century, stated, “Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position.”<sup>2</sup> He insisted that we are alone in the universe, so the choices we make are not based on any meaning or purpose outside of ourselves, nor on a fixed moral code. Rather we have completely free choice. However, whatever decisions we make are ultimately meaningless. Sartre explained, “Dostoevsky once wrote, ‘If God did not exist, everything would be permitted’; and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself.”<sup>3</sup>

Based on similar existentialist ideas, the French writer Albert Camus depicted life and human existence as completely absurd. Surprisingly, despite their belief that life is absurd and that humans are “forlorn,” Sartre and Camus both saw their existentialist worldview as liberating. I suppose they exulted in the freedom to do whatever they wished. No one could tell them what to do. However, many, including myself, find their nihilistic perspective rather bleak and unsatisfying, not liberating.

Atheists and agnostics with much different philosophical perspectives have likewise admitted that the non-existence of God entails the view that life has no meaning and purpose. Bertrand Russell, one of the most famous British intellectuals of the twentieth century, based his philosophy on logic and reason, unlike the existentialists. However, he agreed with Sartre that human life has no ultimate meaning. In 1903 he stated,

*That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the*

*debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.*<sup>74</sup>

Russell didn't use the term "cosmic accident" here, but he expressed the same idea by calling humans the product of "accidental collocations of atoms." He also implied that all human achievements are ultimately vain.

What implications does this have for our view of the value of human beings? In 1925 Russell clarified that humans are not really all that valuable. He stated, "The philosophy of nature must not be unduly terrestrial; for it, the earth is merely one of the smaller planets of one of the smaller stars of the Milky Way. It would be ridiculous to warp the philosophy of nature in order to bring out results that are pleasing to the tiny parasites of this insignificant planet."<sup>75</sup> So, in Russell's worldview, humans are merely "parasites." Russell chose a very unfortunate term here, because this was precisely what the Nazis called the Jews: "parasites." And how do we generally treat "parasites"? The same way the Nazis treated the Jews.

In Russell's philosophy, maybe it doesn't really matter if human lives are snuffed out (though Russell knew better, as we shall see in the section on Premise 2 of my argument). Russell, after all, argued forcefully that morality is based entirely on subjective desires or emotions. In his view, moral statements are merely preferences, not statements of fact. Thus, according to Russell and similarly-minded philosophers, the statement "Thou shalt not murder" is not a statement about some objective moral truth. Rather it simply means: "I don't like murder."

More recently, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, one of the most influential atheists alive today, has admitted that atheism has no room for any transcendent purposes for human life. His book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, is an attempt to explain how life could arise without any purpose and design. Therein he stated, "Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind."<sup>76</sup> Elsewhere he summarized his view in this way: "The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference."<sup>77</sup>

Another evolutionary biologist and prominent atheist, Jerry Coyne, agrees with Dawkins. He also insists that life has no overarching meaning or purpose. Evolution, he explains, "says that there is no special purpose for your life, because it is a naturalistic philosophy. We have no more extrinsic purpose than a squirrel or an armadillo."<sup>78</sup> Humans are apparently no more valuable than any other chance arrangement of molecules in the universe.

The astrophysicist and atheist Lawrence Krauss is even more crass in his portrayal of humans. He stated, "We're just a bit of pollution. If you got rid of us, and all the stars and all the galaxies and all the planets and all the aliens and everybody, then the universe

would be largely the same. We're completely irrelevant.”<sup>9</sup> Consistent with this bleak view of “reality,” Krauss once described love as merely “the firing of neurons and biochemical reactions.”<sup>10</sup> Everything human, according to Krauss, can be reduced to chemistry and physics.

Finally, Peter Singer, one of the most renowned bioethicists today, does not believe that human life has any intrinsic value. Indeed, I debated him on Justin Brierly's radio show *Unbelievable* on precisely this question: “Is human life intrinsically valuable?”<sup>11</sup> Singer took the negative position. His book, *Unsanctifying Human Life*, together with many other writings, urge us to dispense with the Judeo-Christian idea that human lives are sacred, special, and valuable. In his book, *Practical Ethics*, Singer stated that human life has no meaning and purpose, because biological life began “in a chance combination of gasses; it then evolved through random mutation and natural selection. All this just happened; it did not happen to any overall purpose.”<sup>12</sup> Based on these views, Singer argues for the moral propriety of abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, and euthanasia.

These examples I have provided demonstrate that secular thinkers themselves understand the implications of their rejection of theism. It means that human life has no intrinsic value or transcendent meaning or purpose. Now that I have proven Premise 1, let's move to Premise 2, which is admittedly a little trickier.

## **Premise 2: Human Lives are Intrinsically Valuable**

Since I have just shown that many secular thinkers overtly argue that human life is not intrinsically valuable and that human life does not have any transcendent purpose or meaning, it might seem that my Premise 2 is useless. That is, even if it is true, atheists and agnostics would never accept it, so it lacks traction in any discussions with them.

I admit that this makes the task of validating this premise rather daunting. Nonetheless, despite this problem, I still think that we can appeal to our basic intuition that human lives are intrinsically valuable. I will do so in two distinct, but overlapping ways.

By showing the inconsistencies in the thought and lives of those who overtly deny that human life has value, meaning, and purpose.

By illustrating the consequences of this worldview when it is followed consistently.



## SECULARISTS' INCONSISTENCY ON THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

It's one thing to make a rational argument (or an irrational one in the case of existentialists, who scorn rationality) that human life has no value, meaning, or purpose. It's quite another to believe this so thoroughly that one lives one's life in harmony with this philosophy.

I am convinced that most secular thinkers understand at some level that human lives do have value, meaning, and purpose, despite their vocal and vigorous denials. Why do I think so? All one has to do is follow the news to discover many cases of this. Many (though not all) secularists are politically progressive and support such movements and policies as Black Lives Matter and racial equality. Many secularist intellectuals are loudly calling for "social justice" for those who are oppressed or disadvantaged. But why do these things matter to them? Isn't it because they somehow recognize that human lives are valuable? They do seem to know, after all, that people's lives have moral significance.

Further, no matter how insistent they are in maintaining that life has no meaning or purpose and that morality is not objective, they are incredibly dogmatic in maintaining their own moral and political positions. They never admit that their own moral standards could possibly be wrong or merely their own subjective position. On the contrary, they use every method imaginable to persuade others to adopt their moral and political positions. Often they accuse those who disagree with them of being bigoted and hateful, of not caring about people. Again: Why? I have a hunch it is because at some level they recognize that lives really are valuable. Otherwise, there really is nothing wrong with being hateful. They seem to know that love is superior to hatred.

Some might try to evade the force of my argument here by maintaining that morality is a universal trait that has been inculcated in us humans through our evolutionary development. This is a position that the prominent philosopher of science Michael Ruse takes. In a 2014 debate with John Hare he stated, "I think morality is an illusion put in place by our genes to make us social cooperators." He stated that morality is based largely on our emotions. He hastened to explain that he believes that morality does really exist. However, he admitted that morality has no justification, so it only exists in our biological makeup,

not outside ourselves.<sup>13</sup>

But Ruse has a problem. He insisted in this debate that Sophie Scholl, who was executed for trying to stir up opposition to the Nazi regime, was a moral hero to resist those evil Nazis. However, the Nazis believed that Scholl was the evil one, which is why they executed her. Ruse's emotions may tell him that the Nazis are evil and Scholl is good (and most of his audience will likely agree), but the Nazis' emotions told them otherwise. All Ruse is left with is an appeal to other people's emotions. If neo-Nazis and white supremacists disagree with his moral intuitions (as they do), then Ruse is unable to tell them they are wrong. Or, he can tell them they are evil, and he can even shout it at them, but he cannot provide any rationale to justify why their moral position is any worse than his own. This seems problematic, because it seems that Ruse wants to insist that Scholl really is good and the Nazis really are evil. I admit that Ruse can escape this problem by admitting that the neo-Nazis' moral opinions are just as valid as his own, but I wonder if he is willing to say this.

Ironically, many secularists criticize Christianity for launching the Crusades and the Inquisition, resulting in the death of multitudes. (Of course, they ignore all the charitable organizations and actions that Christianity has created). This is a valid criticism, for the Crusades and the Inquisition were horrific acts that were not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. However, criticizing Christianity, or any religion or person, for killing people presupposes that human lives are valuable and have meaning and purpose. Otherwise, why does this matter? If the Inquisition was merely the rearrangement of an "accidental collocation of atoms," if it was merely the extinguishing of lives that are meaningless anyway, then why get all worked up about it? The reason this criticism of Christianity makes any sense at all is because secularists are conceding that human lives are valuable and have meaning and purpose.

While I am writing this booklet, the US is going through the aftermath of a mass school shooting in Uvalde, TX, where a gunman killed nineteen children and two adults. Like just about everyone else in the US, secularists are expressing outrage. Many secularists are calling for gun control. Why? Because they recognize that the lives of these children were valuable and that the lives of other children are valuable. Children aren't merely cosmic accidents or "accidental collocations of atoms." Their lives have meaning and significance.

One of the most powerful examples of inconsistency I came across as I did research for my book, *The Death of Humanity: And the Case for Life* was none other than Bertrand Russell. As we have already seen, he overtly dismissed the idea that human lives have any meaning or significance in the cosmic scheme of things. However, his life was oddly out of synch with his philosophy.

In his autobiography Russell divulged that his life was animated by three passions: love, knowledge, and pity for human suffering. Because of his pacifist convictions, Russell was a leading voice for nuclear disarmament. He even spent time in jail for protesting

against nuclear weapons. Apparently, despite his statements denying that human life has any meaning or purpose, Russell did think human lives had value. With moral fervor, he opposed policies that he feared could cause us to blow each other to smithereens. Also, despite his claim that morality is merely subjective desires, Russell embraced love as a moral ideal. Indeed, his daughter Katherine Tait insisted that despite his philosophy, Russell was intensely moralistic.

Perhaps Russell—if he wanted to be consistent with his own philosophy—could argue that he was simply giving vent to his own emotions and feelings. However, if that is the case, then why was he trying so hard to impose his own feelings and emotions on other people who did not share his moral ideals?

Indeed, there is evidence that Russell knew that his philosophy was contradictory to his own life. Baring his soul in a letter to a woman he loved, he explained,

*I am strangely unhappy because the pattern of my life is complicated, because my nature is hopelessly complicated; a mass of contradictory impulses; and out of all this, to my intense sorrow, pain to you must grow. The centre of me is always and eternally a terrible pain—a curious wild pain—a searching for something beyond what the world contains, something transfigured and infinite—the beatific vision—God—I do not find it, I do not think it is to be found—but the love of it is my life—it’s like passionate love for a ghost. At times it fills me with rage, at times with wild despair, it is the source of gentleness and cruelty and work, it fills every passion that I have—it is the actual spring of life within me. I can’t explain it or make it seem anything but foolishness—but whether foolish or not, it is the source of whatever is any good in me. . . . At most times, now, I am not conscious of it, only when I am strongly stirred, either happily or unhappily. I seek escape from it, though I don’t believe I ought to.<sup>14</sup>*

Russell, of course, never divulged these internal struggles to the public during his lifetime. However, this private confession indicates that he somehow knew that human life has transcendent meaning. Further, he recognized that this contradicted his own philosophy. As far as we know, he never figured out how to solve his “mass of contradictory impulses.”

In most cases, of course, we don’t have overt confessions by secular thinkers about the contradictions in their thought or lives. Nonetheless, sometimes it is not too difficult to pinpoint the inconsistencies in their thought. As we already discussed, Jerry Coyne claimed that humans have no more purpose in their lives than do squirrels or armadillos. However, he seems to know better. When anti-evolutionists have pointed out that Darwinian ideology played a role in the Columbine High School massacre in 1999, Coyne has expressed outrage. How dare they blame Darwinism for this atrocity! But why does Coyne even care about people being shot to death? Squirrels and armadillos are being killed all the time. Somehow, Coyne seems to know that those high school students in

Columbine have far more value than squirrels.

Further, Coyne argues that euthanasia should be legalized, because, he explains, we euthanize dogs when they are sick and suffering. Why not humans, he asks? However, what if I made this suggestion to Coyne: Let's round up all the homeless people in Chicago, jail them, sterilize them, and only release them if someone will take them into their home; if no one takes them after a few months, we will euthanize them. I'm sure Coyne would either think I'm insane or else explode in outrage. However, what I just described is exactly how we treat stray dogs. I'm confident that Coyne understands that we shouldn't treat humans like dogs.

Indeed, Coyne's views on morality are equally contradictory. First, he argues that morality is an evolved phenomenon, which implies that it has no objective basis. It simply exists because it gave our ancestors an advantage in the struggle to survive and reproduce. However, he then argues forcefully that his secular morality is superior to religious morality. Superior in what way? In winning the struggle for existence? This cannot be right, because more people worldwide embrace religious morality than embrace secular morality. It seems more likely that Coyne believes that secular morality really is superior to religious morality. However, this means there must be some yardstick outside of both moral systems to determine which is better. This means that morality is not just an evolved phenomenon, but has an objective existence outside of ourselves.

Occasionally when I have had discussions with people who claim that life has no purpose or meaning and that morality is merely subjective, I try to see how serious they are in maintaining this position. I pose the "Hitler Question." I ask: "Were Hitler's atrocities morally wrong?" Since many secularists throw around the term "fascist" as a smear on anyone they consider too right-wing, this generally has a sobering effect. Unfortunately, a philosophy graduate student once told me in response that Hitler was neither right nor wrong, because there is no objective morality. When I pressed him, he admitted that he didn't like what Hitler did, but he still maintained that it was not objectively immoral. I hope that his conscience made him reconsider later.

However, it could be that some secularists, no matter how they are confronted with the truths that most of us consider "self-evident" (such as the truth that human lives are valuable) will continue to deny them. So be it. However, it's just possible that discussions relating to the value of human life may resonate with their intuitions. Again, I suspect that deep down they really do know that human lives are valuable and have meaning.

So why would they continue to deny this truth that seems so obvious? A variety of motives could be in play, which may differ from one person to the next. However, the famous twentieth-century novelist Aldous Huxley, actually told us why as a young man he had denied that life had meaning. He explained:

*I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this*

*assumption. . . . For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.*<sup>15</sup>

Huxley is by no means unique in this respect. We as humans have an amazing tendency to convince ourselves that black is white and white is black if it means that we can get our own way and pursue our own pleasures. We justify our behavior—no matter how despicable—either by denying that what we are doing is wrong, or by justifying our behavior, or by simply ignoring the problem. This is not just a modern phenomenon; the ancient prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.” (Isaiah 5:20)

Another overlapping problem that hinders some of us humans from accepting that human life and the universe has meaning and purpose is that this means we are under the authority of the Being who endowed it with purpose and meaning. Quite a few years ago I attended a conference on evolutionary ethics at Oxford University. I had the chance to talk with the philosopher of science Michael Ruse over breakfast, and during our conversation he said (and I wrote this down immediately after our encounter, so I could quote it as exactly as possible): “God and I never really got along from the time I was young. I don’t want anyone telling me what to do in this life, and I sure don’t want anyone telling me what to do in the next one.” This statement corresponds closely to a comment he made in a 2014 debate with John Hare, where he stated, “I often joke about my feeling about God: Having had one headmaster in this life, I don’t want another one in the next life.”<sup>16</sup>

The problem for Ruse, then, centers on authority. He apparently doesn’t want anyone telling him what to do. My response to Ruse at our breakfast encounter was to suggest to him that God is a benevolent authority. He exercises authority for the benefit of those under Him. He is not a cosmic bully, merely trying to stomp all over us so He can get His way. Rather He loves us. Ruse replied, “I’ve never been good with authority.”

In sum, it seems that even secularists who overtly reject the notion that human lives have intrinsic value and transcendent meaning seem to know better than that at some level. Many contradict their own philosophy by insisting that humans are important and morally significant. But what about those secularists who are more consistent in denying the value of human life? Let’s see where that leads . . .

## NOXIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF BELIEVING THAT HUMAN LIFE IS NOT INTRINSICALLY VALUABLE

Many secularists are decent, loving, kindly people who, despite their insistence that human life has no value or purpose, still treat it as though it does. I much prefer this inconsistency to the ruthless consistency of someone who thinks human life has no value and decides to treat people that way. Indeed, there are many historical examples of people who have committed atrocities in the name of secular philosophies. They see no reason to treat fellow humans with dignity, if people are merely cosmic accidents. Why respect the lives of other people, if those lives are meaningless, purposeless, and valueless?

Based on an atheistic Marxist philosophy, communist regimes have been notorious for denying the value of human life—especially the lives of those who happen to disagree with them. In the course of the twentieth century communist regimes massacred over 100 million people. Marx explained in *The Communist Manifesto* that the working class (proletariat) would have to use harsh measures against the middle class (bourgeoisie) to win the class struggle and usher in a communist society. Setting up the first communist regime in the world, Vladimir Lenin justified brutal measures by overtly arguing that the ends justify the means. Subsequent communist rulers, especially Stalin and Mao, executed millions in their vain attempt to achieve a communist society. These horrific means, however, never produced the promised ends. They just produced mass death and destruction, coupled with intense oppression and the suppression of human rights and liberties.

The Nazi regime was not atheistic, but it was pantheistic and anti-Christian (for evidence for this, see my book, *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs That Drove the Third Reich*). Clearly Hitler and his henchmen did not believe that all humans were created in the image of God. The Nazis claimed that only healthy “Aryans” were superior and deserving of life. People with disabilities or those belonging to other races were allegedly inferior. Because Nazis did not think these “inferior” people’s lives had value, they had no compunction about exterminating them. This resulted in the mass murder of about 6 million Jews, hundreds of thousands of Gypsies, millions of Slavs (mostly Soviet POWs), about 200,000 disabled Germans, and others. Indeed, Hitler and his colleagues thought

they were doing a noble thing by eliminating the “unfit.” They supposed that their deeds would promote evolutionary progress (for more on this theme, see my book, *Darwinian Racism: How Darwinism Influenced Hitler, Nazism, and White Nationalism*).

Secular worldviews have also motivated mass murders on a smaller scale than the communist or Nazi atrocities. Eric Harris, one of the two perpetrators of the Columbine High School Massacre, confided in his journal, “I just love Hobbes and Nietzsche [sic].” Hobbes, of course, was a political philosopher who advocated strong governmental power, and Nietzsche was an atheistic philosopher who exulted in the “will to power.” In his journal Harris clearly articulated a secular, anti-religious philosophy, stating, “there’s no such thing as True Good or True Evil, its all relative to the observer. Its just all nature, chemistry, and math. deal with it.” (grammatical errors are in the original) He also remarked, “just because your mommy and daddy told you blood and violence is bad, you think its a law of nature? wrong, only science and math are true, everything, and I mean everything else is man made.” He exulted in the Darwinian struggle for existence, so when he shot up his high school he wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the words, “Natural Selection.”<sup>17</sup>

Harris was not the only mass murderer to appeal to Darwinism and secular thought to justify his evil. The Finnish student, Pekka-Eric Auvinen, whose cyber nickname was “Natural Selector,” killed eight fellow students in a school shooting in 2007. In his manifesto, he stated, “Humans are just a species among other animals and world does not exist only for humans. Death and killing is not a tragedy, it happens in nature all the time between all species. Not all human lives are important or worth saving.” His killing spree put these ideas into action.<sup>18</sup>

More recently, in May 2022, a white supremacist gunned down 10 people in a Buffalo grocery store with a predominately African-American clientele. In his manifesto he posed as a man of reason and logic. He constantly appealed to statistics and science, including evolutionary biology, to justify his racist ideology. Nothing in his secular philosophy restrained him from acting on his misguided belief in human inequality, which he thought was scientific.<sup>19</sup>

I am not implying that people embracing secular worldviews are mass murderers or that they are more immoral or more evil than others. However, it does seem to me that their philosophy does not provide them with sound reasons to counter these kinds of immoral and evil actions. There may be other reasons they don’t perpetrate crimes or evil deeds, such as their fear of punishment or death or their desire to maintain a comfortable life in harmony with others or their feelings or their upbringing. However, if they really think that humans are the product of chance events and have no transcendent meaning and purpose, then smashing someone’s skull with a hammer is not much different from smashing a rock. It is merely rearranging some atoms in a meaningless world.

Indeed, the serial killer and cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer admitted as much. Dahmer was arrested in 1991 for his killing spree and was convicted. Before being murdered in prison, he was interviewed and explained his mindset. He claimed that while he was carrying out

his evil deeds, he believed that “the theory of evolution is truth, that we all just came from the slime, and when we died, you know, that was it, there was nothing—so the whole theory cheapens life.” Since he didn’t think other people’s lives had value, he didn’t see any reason why he shouldn’t kill and eat them, if he was so inclined. He admitted, “If a person doesn’t think there is a God to be accountable to, then what’s the point in trying to modify your behavior to keep it in acceptable ranges?” Dahmer’s nihilistic philosophy caused him to cast off all restraint and to indulge himself, no matter how grotesque his deeds were.<sup>20</sup>

In trying to respond to these atrocities, secularists are caught in a dilemma. They either need to admit that these kinds of tragedies are the logical outcome of their secular philosophies (or at least permitted by them), or they need to condemn these atrocities and show that they are aberrations from their secular values. If they take the former approach, they have to admit that Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Dahmer, and other mass murderers are fellow travelers with them on their secular path. If they take the second approach, they have to admit that human lives really do have value. But if human lives have value, then God must exist.

Indeed, many secularists when confronted by the many atrocities committed by other secularists, point out that there is a kinder, gentler secularism in many European countries. There secularists promote more humane values, such as caring for the poor and the sick. Secularists there support government assistance for the poor and universal medical insurance. However, if by these policies they are indicating that human lives have value, as they seem to be doing, then this points to the existence of a loving Creator of humans.

Further, European secularism is schizophrenic on the issue of the value of human life. They seem to value most human lives, but they are increasingly finding categories of people whose lives they do not consider worth protecting. Unborn babies may be killed in most European countries, for instance, which has resulted in millions of deaths. Also, as secularism increases, so does the push for promoting assisted suicide and euthanasia for those who are ill, disabled, or simply “tired of life.” Our mass slaughter may not be based on race or class, as with the Nazis or the communists, but it is every bit as deadly.



## CONCLUSION

Quite a few secular thinkers have argued that nothing in the cosmos has transcendent meaning or purpose, and that human life has no intrinsic value or moral significance. However, as I have shown, they seem to know better. They continually express opinions and act in ways demonstrating that deep down they know humans are valuable. If a mass murderer justifies his atrocities with a secular philosophy denying the value of human life, most secularists want to distance themselves from that person. They seem to understand that human life does indeed have value.

Thus, I have presented considerable evidence for my original proposition:

**PREMISE 1:** If God does not exist, then human life has no intrinsic value, transcendent meaning, purpose, or objective moral significance.

**PREMISE 2:** Human life has intrinsic value, transcendent meaning, purpose, and objective moral significance.

**CONCLUSION:** Therefore, God exists.

Of course, this doesn't prove that the Christian God exists, but it takes us a step in that direction. Once we take that step and acknowledge that there is a Creator God, then we can begin examining the many lines of evidence that point to Jesus as that Creator who loves us and wants us to live with him forever. Then we can have the wonderful opportunity of submitting to him and fulfilling the purpose and meaning for our lives. We can then reflect the image of God in a beautiful way, rather than living as though we are a "cosmic accident," a "parasite," or "pollution."

## ENDNOTES

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## FURTHER READING

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J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (esp. ch. 4)

C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*

C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*

Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Weikart is emeritus professor of modern European history at California State University, Stanislaus, and author of seven books, including *The Death of Humanity: And the Case for Life*; *Darwinian Racism: How Darwinism Influenced Hitler, Nazism, and White Nationalism*; and *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs That Drove the Third Reich*. He has appeared in seven documentaries, including *Expelled* with Ben Stein. Many lectures and interviews with him are available on YouTube and other websites.

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General Editor Rick James

ratiochristi.org | info@ratiochristi.org  
Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter: @ratiochristi

