

# THE NEW ATHEISM

# Secularization

- It used to be impossible not to believe (into the Medieval world)
- It became possible not to believe (The Enlightenment)
- It's impossible to believe.

# The First Big Problem

- It's impossible to prove a “universal negative”

# Richard Dawkins

- Former professor of Oxford
- Has written over a dozen books against Christianity
- Calls himself, “The Devil’s Chaplain”
- Militant Atheism



# Christopher Hitchens

- Writer and political commentator
- Died in December 2011
- Religion is sexually oppressive
- Collision/Is Christianity Good for the World w/ Douglas Wilson



# Daniel Dennett

- Professor of Tuft's University
- Believes that Darwinian evolution is the “universal acid”
- Is trying to come up with a totally naturalistic understanding of human consciousness



# Sam Harris

- PhD in neuroscience from UCLA
- Letter to a Christian Nation
- “Science must destroy religion”



# Victor Stenger

- God: The Failed Hypothesis
- Professor of Philosophy - University of Colorado





# What's "New" about it?

- Focus: They are focused on Christianity
- Audience: The masses, not the academy
- Tone: They are angry
- Grounding: The natural sciences rather than philosophy

# What's "New" about it?

- Aim: To eradicate Christianity from the planet
- Tolerance: They want to abolish all religious tolerance
- Ignorance: Regarding History and classical Christian proofs
- Zeal: they are launching an evangelical campaign

# Is it working?

- Yes... unfortunately...
- In the US in the last 5 years the “unaffiliated” have increased from just over 15% to 20% of all US adults.
- From 3%-6% Atheist/Agnostic
- 72.8% of philosophy professors “accept or lean towards atheism”

# Is it working?

- In Canada: 1 out of every 4 adults considers themselves with “no religious affiliation” up from 16.5% in 2001 and 12% 1991.
- England: Christianity is declining 50% faster than they thought. Dropping 15% in a decade.

# No Answers

- Origin
- Meaning/Purpose/Value
- Morality
- Science
- Human Consciousness

# Thomas Nagel

- I say this as someone who cannot imagine believing what he believes. But even those who cannot accept the theist alternative should admit that Plantinga's criticisms of naturalism are directed at the deepest problem with that view—how it can account for the appearance, through the operation of the laws of physics and chemistry, of conscious beings like ourselves, capable of discovering those laws and understanding the universe that they govern.



# Thomas Nagel

- Defenders of naturalism have not ignored this problem, but I believe that so far, even with the aid of evolutionary theory, they have not proposed a credible solution. Perhaps theism and materialist naturalism are not the only alternatives.



# Why?

- Rejection of authority
- Poor representation of Christianity
- Emotional overreaction to the Problem of Evil



# How Should We Respond

- Don't be afraid... the truth is on our side - Worldviews Matter
- Get grounded and think critically
- Put your hope in the Gospel

# Folks to pay attention to:

- John Lennox
- Alvin Plantinga
- Alister McGrath
- Al Mohler