

Herding Cats

Atheism is Myth-Understood

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Classification:

1. Atheism
2. Religion
3. Humanism
4. Christianity
5. Bible Study
6. Secularism
7. Women Authors—non-fiction
8. Bible-Science
9. Biblical Criticism

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION: This is an excerpt. This is only an excerpt. If it was the actual 1000 page book, you would have been informed, and there would have been many pages of references, indexes, footnotes, a more expansive context, and quite a few more words. Please read this out of the purview of religious zealots, as they are prone to violence when reminded that others don't always buy into their god-thing. Thank you and enjoy your beverage.

Summary:

Directed at agnostics and those struggling with the inconsistencies in Christianity in particular, and religion in general, an author struggles to find her own Personal Cosmology by examining and sharing her beliefs and discoveries about God, the Bible and Christianity. Includes *Philosophy, Reason & Intelligence/Herding Cats: The History & Nature of Atheism/Atheism is Myth-Understood/Atheist, Unaware/Benefits of Atheism/Atheists, Skeptics & Infidels, Oh My/What are Atheists like?/Morality Vs. Ethics/Immortal Christians, Immoral Atheists /Morality of the Godless/ Infidels Worldwide/Giving Infidels.*

While I struggle with unanswered questions — things I cannot understand — I have an even bigger problem placing faith in those things. It is far too convenient to use the ad hoc explanations that Christianity offers; I believe in what is proven, or what there is the most empirical proof for; not what "sounds nice" or appeals to my needs, wishes, desires, or fancy.

Without the ability to think rationally, the human being tends toward the mystical and magical to explain the wonders of our world. This is an effective way to avoid responsibility for self, and undermines the progression of evolution in our species. To cloak your reason with the raiment of religion, insures that you will not consider the very real and proven truths that exist since Science began to answer so many of these niggling questions for us.



Philosophy, Reason & Intelligence

"Man's mind is his tool for survival, but like all tools, it must be properly used. The mind manipulates knowledge, and knowledge can only be obtained through reason. Without reason, there is no knowledge, and thus no survival."

~ Jeff Landauer and Joseph Rowlands

While I struggle with unanswered questions — things I cannot understand — I have an even bigger problem placing faith in those things. It is far too convenient to use the ad hoc explanations that Christianity offers; I believe in what is proven, or what there is the most empirical proof for; not what "sounds nice" or appeals to my needs, wishes, desires, or fancy.

That's why understanding philosophy and utilizing its doctrine of reason, is at once a better choice.

Richard Carrier defines Philosophy in a succinct and edifying way.

Philosophy is what we believe, about ourselves, about the universe, and our place in it. Philosophy is the Answer to every Big Question, and the ground we stand on when finding answers to every small one. Our values, our morals, our goals, our identities, who we are, where we are, and above all how we know any of these things, it all comes from our philosophy of life—whether we know it or not.

I believe there is a pressing need for our educational institutions to make the study of philosophy mandatory. Study in this area allows a person to learn not merely the importance of thinking, but shows them HOW to think, and in ways that produce real and tangible benefits. Carrier continues:

You either have a coherent, sensible, complete philosophy that is well-supported by all the evidence that humans have yet mustered, or you do not.

Without the ability to think rationally, the human being tends toward the mystical and magical to explain the wonders of our world. This is an effective way to avoid responsibility for self, and undermines the progression of evolution in our species. To cloak your reason with the raiment of religion, insures that you will not consider the very real and proven truths that exist since Science began to answer so many of these niggling questions for us. An example of this ignorance is to be found in this quote: "The Earth is flat, and anyone who disputes this claim is an atheist who deserves to be punished" (Baaz)"

Carrier elaborates:

...religion has become a factory-made commodity, sold off the shelf to the masses, who assume it must be good if it is really old and lots of smarter and better educated people say it's a good buy ("8 out of 10 experts recommend Christian Brand Salvation!"). People think they can just plug such a goodie into their lives, maybe with a few unskilled adjustments of their own, and never have to think about whether it is well-constructed, well-thought-out, or even true. Some people, more creative but no wiser, take a shallow glance around and tear pieces from existing products, or grab whatever pops into their heads, and throw together something of their own, with little in the way of careful investigation or analysis (p.3-4).

There's a reason why reason is reasonable. It allows us to see the world as it is, rather than as we wish it were. It gives us tools for discerning the intrinsic value of behavior, decisions, relationships, and purpose.



Herding Cats: The History & Nature of Atheism

"It is proof of a base and low mind for one to wish to think with the masses or majority, merely because the majority is the majority. Truth does not change because it is, or is not, believed by a majority of the people."

~Giordano Bruno

Atheism originates from the Greek word *atheos*, which means "without God." In English the word derives from the French term, *athéisme*. And there are those who adhere to the apathetic version, *apatheism*, which means they just don't care and don't try to explain things in supernatural ways.

Though the concept of atheism began in the 16th century, and was considered pejorative, it wasn't until the 18th century that atheism became embraced as an open philosophical stance. Philosopher Denis Diderot, who died in 1784, was imprisoned for his beliefs and his books were banned or burned (Encyclopedia of World Biography) during the Enlightenment, an era of reason and science in which few were actually enlightened or reasonable.

The French Revolution saw the emergence of The Cult of Reason, an atheistic system of beliefs (Fremont-Barnes).

The argument that primitive peoples always believed in a god is erroneous. According to philosopher, historian and author Will Durant, there are certain African pygmy tribes, (the dwarfs of Cameroon, the Veddahs of Ceylon, for example), that had absolutely no evidence of belief in any sort of deity.

From long ago Norse Mythology, as noted by Jacob Grimm (half of the Brothers Grimm, famous for Grimm's Fairy Tales), the seed of atheism could be found.

It is remarkable that Old Norse legend occasionally mentions certain men who, turning away in utter disgust and doubt from the heathen faith, placed their reliance on their own strength and virtue. Thus in the *Sôlar lioð* 17 we read of Vêbogi and Râdey *â sik þau trúðu*, "in themselves they trusted" (Grimm).

While religion sprang from ignorance, atheism sprang from intelligence; while religion stems from fear, atheism stems from understanding and courage.



Atheism is Myth-Understood

"Every mind was made for growth, for knowledge; and its nature is sinned against when it is drowned in ignorance."

~William W. Channing

In its simplest form, atheism is the lack of belief in any gods. But individuality steps in and makes the definitions more complicated, as there are many versions of atheism, some of which aren't called atheism at all.

Someone said that organizing atheists is rather like herding cats. Cats and atheists are not given easily to being herded, as they are much too intelligent and independent to tolerate it.

Atheism as the lack of belief, also implies that atheism does not require proof of the non-existence of God. The burden of proof is always on the side of the positive statement or assertion. Additionally, it is said to be logically impossible to prove a universal negative; that is, a proposition that excludes everything.*

*This stems from Aristotelian Propositions. Aristotle believed that the core of deductive reasoning was the if-then logic statement.

The antithesis to this claim that you can't prove a universal negative is that the statement itself is false.

It is commonly thought that one cannot prove a negative, but of course I can. If I say "there are no weasels in my right pocket", all I need to do is enumerate the objects in my right pocket and find a dearth of weasels among them to prove that negative claim. So why do people think one can't prove a negative? (Wilkins).

The distinction here is one of constraints. Since you can check your pocket and see that there are no weasels, the constraint is that you have the ability to check the weasel proposition, but there are no constraints in the case of proving God doesn't exist, because no one can see God, in their pocket, or elsewhere, nor is there any other empirical evidence that He exists.

So I think that both Strong Atheists, who explicitly deny the existence of God, and Weak Atheists who implicitly have an absence of belief in any gods, are both acceptable, logically, when considered within any reality we can understand. While many critics deride Strong Atheism as being just as unsound as belief, it's not quite that simple. It is not necessary, and doesn't require 100% proof to believe in most things. We work with the highest degree of certainty. So choosing to disbelieve is a choice based on the highest degree of certainty we have, and there's nothing intellectually dishonest about that, since much of what we *know* is founded on that paradigm.

Just as some people find it hard to understand what atheism is, others don't seem to understand what it isn't. I'll address the most popular misconceptions:

"Atheism is a religion." If we take the agreed-upon definition, meaning that which is in the dictionary, it is "rejection of belief in God or gods." Thus, since there is no supreme being in the estimation of an atheist, there is also no one to worship, no ancient texts to honor and obey, no Ten Commandments to tell us how to behave, and no ancient laws to guide us in our choices.

Emmet F. Fields points out that the dominate ideology of a people will inevitably be the one to inform us of other ideologies.

The article on Atheism in the current edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica was written by a Roman Catholic Jesuit Priest, Rev. Cornelio Fabro, Professor of theoretical Philosophy, University of Perugia, Italy. In the Encyclopedia Americana the article on Atheism was written by Roger L. Shinn, a professor at Union Theological Seminary. It seems that religion, like Communism, can survive only when it can control the information about conflicting beliefs (Fields).

This means that the overview of the subject matter is always colored by the prejudices of each author of the material, and cannot possibly be trusted to give an objective view. Thus, if you wish to know what atheism really is, you must ask those who embrace it and live it, and those who are educated in it from a position of objectivity. This cannot be found in theological treatises. There are, indeed, many factions of Christianity and religions in general, that seek to purposely misrepresent atheism. This can be seen in the aspersion cast at the "godless" as if that is an understood negative. It assumes the point it wishes to prove.*

*this is the logical fallacy known as Unstate Major Premise. See the Logical Fallacy section.

"Atheism is Satanic." This is perhaps the most absurd contention put forth by certain theists. The point here is, if someone doesn't believe in a god, they don't believe in the Devil. So how can they worship something they don't believe exists? This is merely a tactic to cast atheists in a negative light.

"Atheism is an absence of morality." As is clearly shown in other parts of this volume, morality has nothing whatsoever to do with God or the Bible. It has to do with an innate sense of right and wrong, built into our psyches at birth. In fact, atheists are more likely to be moral than are the religious, if the historicity of Christianity and Islamic faith is any indication.

Atheists make conscious choices about their behavior based on ethics and who they wish to be in this world, not on threats from an angry God, or the claims of clergy.

It's no accident that there is little criticism to be found of atheists, other than the ones mentioned above. That's because atheists are not the ones starting holy wars, abusing children, oppressing others, infiltrating the government, or using fear and coercion to gain adherents. Atheism is merely a lack of belief in the gods that are at the root of these issues.



Atheist, Unaware

"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours."

~Stephen Roberts

I wanted to follow God—but on the way, I became confused. The confusion came from all the contradictions; all the actions by reportedly pious people who inflicted harm for no other reason than what they chose to believe; all the pronouncements of goodness and mercy, while they displayed evil and callous disregard for their fellow humans. This, again, was cognitive dissonance, and I chose to discover if it was indeed this way, why it was this way, and what I felt about it.

There are Christians who say it's okay to have their beliefs and they don't agree with the Fundie Christians...but there are enough of them who don't share this sentiment, that we are all endangered. Faith is a personal thing, and it should not be foisted on others. If you wish to believe in invisible beings, and claim to know what this invisible being wants you to do, make sure it doesn't infringe on anyone else, for we all live in a free society, here, and that means the freedom to NOT practice religion.

When a Christian politician does nothing to stop a nuclear bomb from being exploded in Los Angeles or New York or Chicago—because that politician wanted to hasten the Second Coming or was not afraid to die because he just *knows in his heart* he'd go to Heaven—does it matter how many Christians did not agree with him? We're all still dead. And that's the point and the problem. It's about the corrupting influence of religion which can annihilate EVERYONE, regardless of the perceived harmlessness of their beliefs.

Ambiguity being what it is, (and is not), I believe that there are atheists among us who don't know they are atheists. These are the ones who say, *"No, I don't believe in all that Sky Daddy stuff, but I do believe there is some kind of power in the Universe directing things."* In fact, according to a Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 92% believe in God or a Universal Spirit.

Most scientists can illuminate this perspective by telling them what that power is: Nature. There are indeed forces at work in our world. They just aren't beings in the sky.

The lack of dogmatism in America may well reflect the great diversity of religious affiliation, beliefs and practices in the U.S. For example, while more than nine-in-ten Americans (92%) believe in the existence of God or a Universal spirit, there is considerable variation in the nature and certainty of this belief. Six-in-ten adults believe that God is a person with whom people can have a relationship; but one-in-four—including about half of Jews and Hindus—see God as an impersonal force. Wand

while roughly seven-in-ten Americans say they are absolutely certain of God's existence, more than one-in-five (22%) are less certain about their belief (Pew Forum).

The conversion to nonbelief usually begins by rejecting dogma, rejecting organized religion, and then sometimes, but not always, moves on to the concepts of what that might mean on a deeper level. If those dogmas and religions are dismissed, what is left over on that cosmic plate?

There are many things that appear inexplicable. Many things we might not know that more learned people do. And still other things that have no explanation at the current time. Those inexplicables are more often than not explained by some knowledge of science or history or psychology or some other discipline rooted in empirical data. Nature is one of those. The Arguments from Incredulity exemplify this. While we might not understand something that appears miraculous, that doesn't mean there isn't an explanation that excludes a deity.

Therefore, perhaps this recognition of a force at work in our milieu, is merely a recognition of Nature. And unaware atheists might not make that connection right away.

That's where education comes through the door wearing a mortar board hat.



Benefits of Atheism

"It is much better to grasp the universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, no matter how comforting or reassuring."

~ Carl Sagan

In a list by C.J. Werleman, author of *God Hates You, Hate Him Back: Making Sense of the Bible*, we find many advantages for nonbelief. Atheists live longer, are happier, are not required to hate anyone, they make more money, stay married longer, are less likely to be incarcerated, are morally more developed, more likely to excel in academia, are less likely to "succumb to the lure of authoritarian regimes, that promise miraculous and divine-sent decrees," are better able to think critically and freely, and on a humorous note, better in bed (Werleman).

Adam Lee, of *Daylight Atheism*, adds that atheism also frees you of the fear of Hell and religious hatred, offers intellectual freedom, and freedom of purpose, allows a more profound appreciation for the wonders of the universe and all the life in it, makes your actions significant, since they are your own, and not directed by a deity or a dogma, and imbues the confidence of being truly ethical (Lee).

I agree with all of the above, and further, it's a way more productive and worthy use of my time to spend Sundays reading material to expand my mind or education. I no longer have to force myself into clothes I don't feel comfortable wearing, just to compete with the clothes-horses that grace the sanctuaries of our Houses of God.

I can spend that time with people who are interesting, independent, fun, and not with a man in a stupid gown, telling me how I'm going to burn in Hell. I also don't have to be fearful of which location I'll end up in when I die. I have the comfort of knowing that my life really matters, right now, and that's inspiring. It makes me want to honor all my talents and inclinations, and find ways to make each day count because there is no deference to an afterlife. I don't have to make my decisions based on some outmoded and confusing doctrine, but on my own sense of right and wrong, inherently a part of who I am.

I can stop feeling guilty for being human and give myself permission to make mistakes, so that I can learn from them, instead of fear some hideous reprisal from an all-powerful, angry being.

I can stop dropping my money in a plate to pay for a stained glass window in a structural monument to an invisible deity, and instead buy a hungry person a hot meal, a cold child a coat, or my loved ones a special gift. I can cease to support the lavish lifestyles of ministers nationwide, and start supporting things that mean something to me. I can enjoy the sensation of never again having to sing those horrid dirges with a roomful of strangers.

In light of the fact that there are startling similarities between the Christian Right and Hitler's Germany, making the Christian fundamentalists the new Nazis, I'm sorry, what was so bad about being an atheist, again?



Atheists, Skeptics & Infidels, Oh My

"He, who will not reason, is a bigot; he, who cannot, is a fool; and he, who dares not, is a slave."

~William Drummond

There is no belief in supernatural beings for the atheist, thus he or she doesn't have to support something that does not exist.

George H. Smith points out that "proof is applicable only in the case of a positive belief." Sam Harris uses the example that atheists should not even have clubs or groups, as it's misleading. We don't, after all, have groups for "non-astrologists." Thus, it is not the atheist's charge to prove God does not exist, but the *theists* charge to prove He *does*. Proof lands on the side of a positive assertion, not on the absence of one.

If I say I do not believe in faeries or elves or trolls, does this imply that I have a set of beliefs and a lifestyle that adheres to this lack of belief? No, it only implies that I do not believe in faeries, elves and trolls. No one expects me to run out and prove that faeries, elves and trolls don't exist. So one cannot extrapolate morality, philosophy, cosmology, character, political party, or any other thing of that sort from the mere lack of belief in one other thing.

...people who belong to no Church make up the fastest-growing segment of the American population. In the 1980s, no more than 8 per cent refused to identify a religious affiliation...Highly educated Americans are most likely to fall within a group ranging from atheists to those describing their religion as "nothing in particular."

There is a powerful correlation between fundamentalism and lack of education. According to Pew, 45 percent of Americans with no education beyond high school adhere to biblical literalism, while only 29 percent with some university education—and 19 percent of university graduates—share that old-time faith. Republicans have tapped into the fundamentalist resentment of educated, skeptical elites to form the party's right-wing Christian base (Jacoby).

As I've pointed out numerous times, the more education one has, and the higher that person's intelligence, the more likely they will be nonreligious.

That's one thing we can know about atheists. That, and the irony that they generally know more about the Bible than even Christians do. This is because of an innate curiosity and a passion for the truth. In order to form opinions, they learn the subject and make assessments based on discernment, facts, logic and, in case that sounded too clinical, also on things like ethics, compassion, love and the greater good.

What else can be said about atheists? Continue to the next section to find out...



What are Atheists like?

"It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and expose lies."

~Noam Chomsky

The biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, recounted by none other than Jesus himself, presumably is an illustration of the edict, "Love thy neighbor." In the story, a man is beaten and robbed and left by a road. He is ignored by both a passing priest and a Levite. But a Samaritan then comes by and helps him. This Samaritan had not yet heard of "Christian" values—so perhaps the Good Samaritan was, then, a Secular Humanist.

I'm being a bit facetious, only to make a point. Even now, humanists behave in compassionate and generous ways, while rejecting religious beliefs; thus debunking one of religion's most pernicious claims to fame.

Allow me to clarify the nature of atheists. David Mills, author of *Atheist Universe*, has said,

I've never raised my voice to my daughter, never smoked a cigarette, never written a bad check, never gotten a speeding ticket, never been in a fight, and never lied on an income tax form. Except for the tiny fact that I'm an atheist, I lead a good "Christian" life! (Interview)

In order to understand atheists, one must fully comprehend what nonbelief means; not only does this entail no belief in a god, but it also means no belief in a doctrine that requires defense, nor are they threatened directly by others who do have those beliefs. To defend an atheism belief is to defend nothing, because there is no atheist belief system, per se. Being a nonbeliever does not mean "no belief in anything." It only means no belief in a supernatural being. That's it.

Atheists believe in many things: home, family, ethics, love, friendship, honesty, and perhaps their favorite ball team. They are not so different in that respect from believers, only they fashion their view of what has value on their own discernment and not the confused edicts of an invisible being and his ostensible instruction manual called the Bible.

Certainly, nonbelief has as many variations as most things do when humans are involved in identifying a worldview. There are types of nonbelief. Some non-believers call themselves atheists, infidels, skeptics. Some call themselves humanists or secular humanists, or naturalists. Some move into witty monikers like "godless heathens" or "Pastafarians" (for Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster); and still others declare themselves agnostic.

Agnosticism is the most non-stance in nonbelief, in that agnostics don't know, and will not commit to a decision either way. Still, some agnostics actually admit they don't believe in any gods. While perhaps there can be a small percentage of the small percentage of those who reject belief in a god or God, who really do feel that there can be no answer either way, I suspect that agnosticism is a form of intellectual laziness, and thus more an absence of information and discernment, and a lack of commitment to logic, than it is a dismissal of the existence of an answer. As I've said before, *agnosticism is just cowardice in spiritual clothes.*

There are degrees of nonbelief. For instance, "soft & hard atheism" or more commonly, "weak atheism" and "strong atheism." I'll let the highly capable Austin Cline, curator of the popular About.com atheism site, elaborate on the distinctions:

Weak atheism, also sometimes referred to as implicit atheism, is simply another name for the broadest and most general conception of atheism: the absence of belief in any gods. A weak atheist is someone who lacks theism and who does not happen to believe in the existence of any gods—no more, no less. This is also sometimes called agnostic atheism because most people who self-consciously lack belief in gods tend to do so for agnostic reasons.

Strong atheism, also sometimes referred to as explicit atheism, goes one step further and involves denying the existence of at least one god, usually multiple gods, and sometimes the possible existence of any gods at all. Strong atheism is sometimes called "gnostic atheism" because people who take this position often incorporate knowledge claims into it—that is to say, they claim to know in some fashion that certain gods or indeed all gods do not or cannot exist.

George H. Smith discusses *implicit* and *explicit* atheism, but his pair of monikers is more about being conscious or unconscious of what you believe.

I have always had a problem with those divisions, personally, because I feel like when you reduce a definition (irreducible complexity?) into so many specifics, you're just mincing words, confusing the issue even more, and cleverly hiding behind terminology at the expense of clarity. The simple fact of the matter is that if you do not believe in any supernatural beings, you are an atheist.

In fairness, there are motivations for using this verbal cloaking device. Clearly, we live in a nation that frowns upon and often ostracizes and even punishes non-believers for their stance. As a gay woman, I am aware of many situations in which it would not be wise to announce my sexual orientation, for fear of reprisal, and as I've said, quite paradoxically, I have suffered more prejudice for my nonbelief than for my sexual orientation. Atheism is the new "gay." I can only hope that in my lifetime it will, as sexuality has, enjoy more mainstream acceptance.

The reason it has not, is the same as the reasons for prejudice against homosexuals. Outmoded beliefs, incorrect data, fear, omnipresent influence of Scripture, and religious groupthink.



Morality Vs. Ethics

"A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death."

~ Albert Einstein

I've often heard these two terms used interchangeably, but there is a subtle and important difference between them. Morality is:

conformity, or degree of conformity, to conventional standards of moral conduct.

And ethics is:

a social, religious, or civil code of behavior considered correct, esp that of a particular group, profession, or individual.

So ethics is the behavioral code accepted, and morality is the degree to which you honor it.

Underlying the accusation that atheists are bad, or "Godless" is the unspoken assumption that morality is predicated on religious ideals. This is a sort of Straw Man fallacy. The assumption sets up a mythical fact, and then detractors proceed to tear it down. It can also be considered a Loaded Question Fallacy.

A loaded question is a question with a false or questionable presupposition, and it is "loaded" with that presumption. The question *"Have you stopped beating your wife?"* presupposes that you have beaten your wife prior to its asking, as well as that you *have* a wife. If you are unmarried, or have never beaten your wife, then the question is loaded.

Since this example is a yes/no question, there are only the following two direct answers:

"Yes, I have stopped beating my wife", which entails "I *was* beating my wife."

"No, I haven't stopped beating my wife", which entails "I am *still* beating my wife."

Thus, either direct answer entails that you have beaten your wife, which is, therefore, a presupposition of the question. So, a loaded question is one which you cannot answer directly without implying a falsehood or a statement that you deny. For this reason, the proper response to such a question is not to answer it directly, but to either refuse to answer or to reject the question (Curtis).

So, morality and ethics is something an atheist can, and in an overwhelming majority of the time, *does* have. If they don't have morality and ethics, this is an indication of their character, not their nonbelief; and everyone, no matter what their beliefs, is capable of lacking character. But religiosity is shown to provide just the right conditions wherein someone can continually make poor choices; and the religious among us insist that since atheists follow no creed but their own, they are somehow rudderless in the ethical water. This is fallacious as well. Atheists are merely free of dogma and ancient, inapplicable laws set up by the church and its minions.

This does not, however, mean that atheism is a free pass to do whatever you wish.

Morality, according to theism, comes from God and the teachings of any given religion. Atheism denies this correlation and instead acknowledges the scientific evidence that ethics and morality are a natural part of our evolutionary development. All of us are born with an innate understanding of ethics. A good modern example of this is the commercial for Ally Bank wherein the guy gives one child something but tricks another child out of it. The tag line is always something like, "Even a kid knows this is wrong."

Viewers can tell by the response of each child, that they feel on some level that what just happened wasn't fair. And while, no one guarantees that life will be fair, and we all know it isn't, this still makes a cogent point about morality and ethics. Without any training in those situations, a child will feel slighted.

Yale psychology professor Paul Bloom speaks of his research in the areas of innate morality:

Not long ago, a team of researchers watched a 1-year-old boy take justice into his own hands. The boy had just seen a puppet show in which one puppet played with a ball while interacting with two other puppets. The center puppet would slide the ball to the puppet on the right, who would pass it back. And the center puppet would slide the ball to the puppet on the left...who would run away with it. Then the two puppets on the ends were brought down from the stage and set before the toddler. Each was placed next to a pile of treats. At this point, the toddler was asked to take a treat away from one puppet. Like most children in this situation, the boy took it from the pile of the "naughty" one. But this punishment wasn't enough—he then leaned over and smacked the puppet in the head.

Obviously, this baby was not old enough to have been trained how to react. The reactions were at once authentic and stemming from some innate sense of right and wrong. Bloom continues, stating that a "growing body of evidence" reveals that humans already have a sense of morality even in the very early stages of development.

...With the help of well-designed experiments, you can see glimmers of moral thought, moral judgment and moral feeling even in the first year of life. Some sense of good and evil seems to be bred in the bone. Which is not to say that parents are wrong to concern themselves with moral development or that their interactions with their children are a waste of time. Socialization is critically important. But this is not because babies and young children lack a sense of right and wrong; it's because the sense of right and wrong that they naturally possess diverges in important ways from what we adults would want it to be.

And that divergence, as we know, is a great deal more about indoctrination, as I have illustrated in several volumes of this book.

There seems to be something evolutionarily ancient to this empathetic response. If you want to cause a rat distress, you can expose it to the screams of other rats. Human babies, notably, cry more to the cries of other babies than to tape recordings of their own crying, suggesting that they are responding to their awareness of someone else's pain, not merely to a certain pitch of sound. Babies also seem to want to assuage the pain of others: once they have enough physical competence (starting at about 1-year-old), they soothe others in distress by stroking and touching or by handing over a bottle or toy (Bloom).

Young children, who do not have a clear and working understanding of religion, its concepts and philosophies, or the idea of a God, will naturally attempt to console an adult who appears to be saddened or troubled. This is because they are naturally empathetic, sympathetic, moral. At times, it may be necessary to explain morality, or even enforce it in children, but it does not need to be taught to them. You do not need to feed them fables, false promises, or scare them with threats of eternal pain. Simply expound upon the benefits (personal and social) of doing what they do naturally (Sometimes the Truth Hurts).



Immortal Christians, Immoral Atheists

"Everything of value that people get from religion can be had more honestly, without presuming anything on insufficient evidence. The rest is self-deception, set to music."

~ Sam Harris

The religious among us seem to think that atheism or any version of nonbelief is indicative of moral decay. If one doesn't have to answer to a God then one must necessarily have no motivation to behave in a morally acceptable way within society.

In the article, *What is a Free Thinker?* Dan Barker addresses the often misunderstood morality in relation to nonbelievers:

There is no great mystery to morality. Most freethinkers employ the simple yardsticks of reason and kindness. As author Barbara Walker notes: "What is moral is simply what does not hurt others. Kindness...sums up everything."

Most freethinkers are humanists, basing morality on human needs, not imagined "cosmic absolutes." This also embraces a respect for our planet, including the other animals, and feminist principles of equality.

Moral dilemmas involve a conflict of values, requiring a careful use of reason to weigh the outcomes. Freethinkers argue that religion promotes a dangerous and inadequate "morality" based on blind obedience, unexamined ultimatums, and "pie-in-the-sky" rewards of Heaven or gruesome threats of Hell. Freethinkers try to base actions on their consequences to real, living human beings (Barker, Freethinker).

Steven Pinker gives us a compelling example of this also in his paper, "The Moral Instinct":

Which of the following people would you say is the most admirable: Mother Teresa, Bill Gates or Norman Borlaug? And which do you think is the least admirable? For most people, it's an easy question. Mother Teresa, famous for ministering to the poor in Calcutta, has been beatified by the Vatican, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and ranked in an American poll as the most admired person of the 20th century. Bill Gates, infamous for giving us the Microsoft dancing paper clip and the blue screen of death, has been decapitated in effigy in "I Hate Gates" Web sites and hit with a pie in the face. As for Norman Borlaug... who the heck is Norman Borlaug?

Yet a deeper look might lead you to rethink your answers. Borlaug, father of the "Green Revolution" that used agricultural Science to reduce world hunger, has been credited with saving a billion lives, more than anyone else in history. Gates, in deciding what to do with his fortune, crunched the numbers and determined that he could alleviate the most misery by fighting everyday scourges in the developing world like malaria, diarrhea and parasites. Mother Teresa, for her part, extolled the virtue of suffering and ran her well-financed missions accordingly: their sick patrons were

offered plenty of prayer but harsh conditions, few analgesics and dangerously primitive medical care.

It's not hard to see why the moral reputations of this trio should be so out of line with the good they have done. Mother Teresa was the very embodiment of saintliness: white-clad, sad-eyed, ascetic and often photo-graphed with the wretched of the Earth. Gates is a nerd's nerd and the world's richest man, as likely to enter Heaven as the proverbial camel squeezing through the needle's eye. And Borlaug, now 93, is an agronomist who has spent his life in labs and nonprofits, seldom walking onto the media stage, and hence into our consciousness, at all.

Pinker believes, as do I, that these examples serve to illustrate the manner in which an "aura of sanctity" can influence our ability to think rationally, or think things through to the end. If someone seems holy, we stop the process of inquiry and swallow what we are fed because it's easier. Our definition of them becomes a stronger and stronger meme, which we never question. This sort of intellectual laziness is itself the primary catalyst for the ignorance that often drives Christian behavior.

I thank you, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will (Luke 10:21).

It is apparent to me, by this Scripture, that its teachings do not include a healthy respect or admiration for intelligence, discernment or education. What this verse is telling us is, *you are to be commended for your ignorance*. On what planet, is this an admirable trait? Again, reason requires the ability to think things through, and it requires an ability to use our own innate understanding of what makes sense and what doesn't.



Morality of the Godless

"Morality comes from religion? There are no Baptist babies or Catholic babies or Muslim babies. Religion is imposed on children by adults and society, and morality is an evolutionary adaptation. Period."

~Kelli Jae Baeli

There was no Infidel Massacre of 1476, wherein the godless kidnapped Agnostics and dragged their headless torsos through the streets of Rome. There was no Great Atheist Rebellion of 1532, wherein King Henry VIII beheaded all non-believers, and they retaliated by gutting his castle and kidnapping Anne Boleyn. In fact, atheists would have been in no more danger than the Christians, since Ol' Henry beheaded a great number of them, and neither their faith nor their God did anything to help them. Nor did it help Anne Boleyn, who was also beheaded on orders from the king. This was not because Henry was an atheist, either. He was, after all, the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

The point is, there is no historical data to suggest that nonbelievers were anything other than law abiding citizens. There's a cogent reason for this. If you are not blinded by an allegiance to a God whose teachings you use to justify your own hatred and ignorance, there's little chance you will inflict harm on others.

While Christians have always been motivated by their need for a paradise in the great beyond, and alternately, their fear of torture in its antithesis, atheists have no such dark, motivating factors. Not even Satanic, as most ignorant Christians will tell you. Belief in *no supernatural beings* includes the Devil.

Atheists are instead motivated by humanistic values, living lives of meaning, and are historically the agents of positive change—in politics, the arts, social reform, medicine and other Sciences. The suggestion by many believers that atheism is somehow morally corrupt, knows nothing of the facts.

For century after century, there has been an unchallenged belief that social problems would be greatly diminished if only more people fervently believed in a god.

The basis for all moral behavior had to originate with what were given as the laws of the god.

It turns out the opposite is true. A peer-reviewed study published in the *Journal of Religion and Society* at the Catholic Church's Jesuit Creighton University (Paul, Cross-National) and a more recent paper in the *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* (Paul, Chronic Dependence) should be required reading for everyone interested in reducing a wide range of violence and other social problems.

Apparently the studies' author, Gregory S. Paul, is the first person to ever objectively

look at the correlation between prosperous democratic countries' conservative religiosity (measured by the unquestioned belief in a god and the rejection of evolution) and a wide range of indicators of social dysfunction, including the rates of murder, rape, teen-age pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, divorce, economic disparity, life expectancy, child mortality and others. What Paul found is that, in country after country, as the prevalence of conservative religiosity increases, so do the rates of these dysfunctional behaviors. The United States, as the prosperous democratic country with the highest percentage of citizens with the conservative religious beliefs defined above, ranks at or near the top (or should I say bottom) in many of the categories of dysfunctional behavior.

It has been suggested that the values and behavior taught by religions are imposed on the individual from without, that the only reason certain behavior should be done or avoided is because a spirit being wants it that way, and if the individual believes in the existence of the spirit being, he or she will be rewarded upon death. The values "belong" to the spirit being, not the individual. To complicate this, most religions have also taught that it is sometimes very virtuous to kill, destroy and take property, etc. when it is done against those people who do not believe in the one true religion.

By contrast, the nontheist individual's values are generated from within. They arise from the individual's reasoning and logic, leading to the understanding and acceptance of most of the same behaviors taught by religions. In other words, the right and wrong then "belong" to the individual, not to some spirit being.

At the same time, the problems such as venereal disease, teen-age pregnancy and abortions are more prevalent in the religious population because of the lack of effective sex education. Too often their youngsters are simply taught that sexual activity is prohibited until marriage and therefore the young person has no need for any information until then. In addition to open dialog in the home, the secular community is in favor of incorporating comprehensive sex education into the public school system, along with meaningful classroom education on the negative consequences of impulsive, premature sexual activity. Once again, knowledge and reason prevail over ignorance.

Some religious groups have not placed a high value on higher education. This has had the effect of causing more religious believers to be employed in jobs that require less knowledge and skills. This in turn means they have lower incomes, the lower incomes mean lower standards of living and more poverty. That pushes more people into committing property crimes and the accompanying violence. By contrast, the more education a person has, the less likely he or she is to be religious, commit crimes, engage in violence or be imprisoned (Zumach).

To wit:

In Joliet Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois, there were "2,888 Catholics, 1,020 Baptists, 617 Methodists and 0 non-religious."

(If I believed in Hell, I would imagine this as the same stats about occupants in one of its corners).

After interviewing 1,916 prisoners, University of Pittsburgh professor of psychology, W. T. Root, said, "Indifference to religion, due to thought, strengthens character," and

added that Freethinkers, Agnostics, Atheists and Unitarians, were noticeably absent from penitentiaries.

Superintendent of the NY State Reformatories, Dr. Frank L. Christian, found that out of 22,000 prison inmates, there were only four college graduates. Alternatively, 91% of the those included in the popular multi-national biographical compilations, "Who's Who" were college graduates. He remarked that, "intelligence and knowledge produce right living" and that "crime is the offspring of superstition and ignorance."

In Sing Sing Correctional Facility, the maximum security prison in the Village of Ossining, New York, there were a total of 1,553 inmates, and out of those, there were 855 Catholics, 518 Protestants, and 177 Jews and 8 non-religious individuals.

One could argue (and some have) that since the number of outright atheists is much smaller than the number of believers, then there would naturally be more of the faithful behind bars. But this argument forgets the constant cry of believers that they are godly, meaning virtuous. If this were so, there would then be 1% believers in these prisons, and the rest would be infidels, since non believers are *all evil*. One cannot avoid the obvious implication, that it is a question of morality, as espoused by the religious among us; they claim a moral high ground, but their behaviors and subsequent incarceration for those behaviors, continue to be the norm and the majority, while the historicity of non-believer criminal activity continues to be almost non-existent.

More cogently, non-believers make up less than 1% of the total criminal population; In the general population, (non-incarcerated) 52% percent of individuals belong to no church, yet live morally respectable lives. So those numbers don't reflect just hardcore atheists. They reflect also those who don't go to church and are ambiguous about religious belief and affiliation. This suggests that the numbers are not skewed after all, as the religious objectors would have us believe.

So making moral choices for the sake of who you want to be, rather than out of fear, is the more intellectually honest position, and one which engenders civil responsibility. Not at all the picture painted by critical zealots.



Infidels Worldwide

"Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

~John Adams

There are 192 recognized countries in the world, meaning 192 that are members of the United Nations. Kosovo and Vatican City are independent countries not recognized by the U.N., and Taiwan is not recognized, either, though it meets the requirements. Taiwan is the red-headed step-child country, one could say.

Now, out of the survey of the top 50 countries with the highest numbers of agnostics, atheists and non-believers, there are reportedly 477,217,130 who do not believe in any gods. That's the low number, in the spread of low to high.

The high number is 672, 169, 967.*

*I used Zuckerman's statistics, and added them manually on a calculator, using the low-end numbers and came up with 474,783,150. But I didn't want to trust my calculations, so I put the stats in a spreadsheet and let the addition formula do the math for me, to arrive at the numbers cited in the body of text above

Various citations found on the Internet have placed the number at 800 million. Whether or not this number is accurate, remains uncertain, as I could not find a source for that particular figure. So I sought out official surveys with actual numbers published.

It is possible numbers could be that high, however, for three reasons:

-->communist countries with a citizenry who are not free to voice their beliefs for fear of reprisal,

-->those who weren't included in the survey (you can't ask everyone)

-->and confusion in definition of the terminology. For instance, 49% of the people surveyed in Estonia said they did not believe in God, while 11% said they were atheist.

On average, the more atheist a country is, the less criminal its citizens, and these citizens are happier, more intelligent, and enjoy stronger marriages.

...high levels of organic atheism are strongly correlated with high levels of societal health, such as low homicide rates, low poverty rates, low infant mortality rates, and low illiteracy rates, as well as high levels of educational attainment, per capita income, and gender equality. Most nations characterized by high degrees of individual and societal security have the highest rates of organic atheism, and conversely, nations characterized by low degrees of individual and societal security have the lowest rates of organic atheism. In some societies, particularly Europe, atheism is growing. However, throughout much of the world —particularly nations with high birth rates—atheism is barely discernible (Martin).

There is simply no empirical evidence that being a Christian or of any other faith, is in any way more moral, more socially beneficial, more secure, more prosperous, or more literate than being an atheist. In fact, data show the opposite to be true.



Giving Infidels

"If you send your money to a secular charity you can be assured it won't go towards one of the 600 solar-powered talking Bibles being sent over by one Christian organization. At \$100 a piece, that's \$60,000 that could have been used for food, water or medicine. Nauseating."

~Kate Holden

Popular among the religious, is another erroneous belief: that atheists have not contributed anything good to the world at large.

Answers at Yahoo is not the place to go for reliable information, I assure you. Here's an example of why. I was going to post a response to the question below, since the answer was so completely awful, but it was listed as a "resolved question." *Figures.* Most religious people believe they have resolved all the questions.

The question on the site was: "What contributions have atheists made to society?"

Best Answer - Chosen by Asker

None. There is no such thing as atheist [sic] who contribute anything.

An atheist will lie to you and steal from you without qualms of conscience because he doesn't fear God. We have a generation who have given themselves to fornication, lying, theft and blasphemy. We have school shootings, violence, pornography, etc. and what's the common denominator? They lack the fear of God. Atheistic evolution completely removes God and moral accountability. This is a cancer that destroys a nation from the inside.

If this is the Christian perspective, the Devil is redundant. Allow me to dispel that myth, first by saying I will not steal from anyone, am not a liar, have never shot up a school, or violently attacked anyone who wasn't trying to hurt me first. As for fornication, the definition of that is:

voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other.

I'm certainly guilty of fornication, then, but there are few people who don't fall into that category. (I wonder if the respondent to the question even realized what it meant? And if so, did that mean he was one of the small minority of people who have not had sex out of marriage?) I can also name about seven Christian friends who are fornicators. What's the problem? We all usually say "Oh my God" at some point during the festivities. Pornography? I've watched a few films in my day. Blasphemy? *Goddammit, I guess I'm guilty of that too.*

Seriously, that seems to have little to do with a belief in God.

I can further dispel this myth that atheists have never contributed anything with a list of atheists, freethinkers and nontheists who have contributed to our society. Refer to Appendix M for a detailed list, but highlights include,

Stephen Girard, who founded Girard College;

James Lick, who gave away most of his fortune, and established the Lick Observatory, endowed the Pioneer Monument in front of San Francisco's downtown library, as well as the California Academy of Sciences, California School of Mechanical Arts (now Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco), and a home for widows, donated the materials to build San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. He also acknowledged an illegitimate son and left him \$150,00 in his will.

Andrew Carnegie, who gave gifts to public libraries, church organs to local communities, and helped establish numerous colleges, schools and nonprofit organizations. During his lifetime he gave away \$350 million.

And don't forget Carnegie Hall.

Thomas Paine fought for complete equality for women, protested American slavery and cruelty to animals, advocated free public education, wrote the first best seller in America, used his own money to help fund the war for independence, proposed an International Peace Organization, among many other things.

Francis Crick and James Watson discovered the structure of DNA.

There are many more listed in Appendix M, with details of all they have done to help society and advance knowledge and compassion and harmony. Even a huge list of atheist celebrities in Appendix N; some of the more well known are:

Woody Allen, Lance Armstrong, Liv Arnesen, Kevin Bacon, Clive Barker, Dave Barry, Ingmar Bergman, Björk, Susan Blackmore, Bill Blass, Marlon Brando, Peter Buck, Gabriel Byrne, John Byrne, Dean Cameron, James Cameron, Adam Carolla, John Carpenter, Asia Carrera, Robin Christopher, Billy Connolly, David Cross, Alan Cumming, Rodney Dangerfield, Julia Darling, Samuel R. Delany, David Deutsch, Catherine Deveny, Ani DiFranco, Micky Dolenz, Amanda Donohoe, Phil Donahue, Natalie Dormer, Roger Ebert, Dean Edell, Jonathan Edwards, Greg Egan, Paul Ehrlich, Harlan Ellison, Warren Ellis, Hugh Everett, Harvey Fierstein, Brian Flemming, Larry Flynt, Dave Foley, Peter Fonda, John Fowle, Stephen Fry, Noel Gallagher, Janeane Garofalo, Bob Geldof, Ricky Gervais, Mikhail Gorbachev, Germaine Greer, Kathy Griffin, Rachel Griffiths, Joe Haldeman, Harry Harrison, Nina Hartley, Robert A. Heinlein, Katharine Hepburn, Eddie Izzard, Penn Jillette, Billy Joel, Angelina Jolie, Jonathan Katz, Diane Keaton, Ken Keeler, Kevin Kline, Hugh Laurie, Cloris Leachman, Tom Lehrer, Stanislaw Lem, James Lipton, H.P. Lovecraft, Heather MacDonald, Norm Macdonald, Seth MacFarlane, Bill Maher, John Malkovich, Mike Malloy, 'Manda, Barry Manilow, Shirley Manson, Armistead Maupin, John McCarthy, Malachy McCourt, Evelyn McDonnell, Ian McEwan, Todd McFarlane, Montana McGlynn, Sir Ian McKellen, Alexander McQueen, Butterfly McQueen, Jonathan Meades, Stephen Merchant, Tom, Metzger, Arthur Miller, Frank Miller, Jonathan Miller, Mike Mills, Warren Mitchell, John Money, Randy Newman, Mike Nichols, Jack Nicholson, Gary Numan, Barack Obama Sr., Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Patton Oswalt, Joaquin Phoenix, Brad Pitt, Neal Pollack, Paula Poundstone, Terry Pratchett, Robin Quivers, James Randi, Ray Romano, Ron Reagan Jr., Carl Reiner, Rick Reynolds, Brian Ritchie, Brad Roberts, Chris Robinson, Gene Roddenberry, Richard Rodgers, Joe Rogan, Neil Rogers, Henry Rollins, Andy Rooney, Jane Rule, Salman Rushdie, Oliver Sacks, John Sayles, Tom Schulman, Eugenie Scott, Robert Silverberg,

Sarah Silverman, Steven Soderbergh, Todd Solondz, Howard Stern, J. Michael Straczynski, Ken Stringfellow, Julia Sweeney, Matthew Sweet, James Taranto, Teller, Studs Terkel, Pat Tillman, Ted Turner, Eddie Vedder, Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Sarah Vowell, Matt Wagner, Harry Waters, Roger Waters, James Watson, Peter Watts, Steven Weinberg, Gene Weingarten, Joss Whedon, Gene Wilder, Harland Williams, Sean Williams, Ted Williams, Tom Wolfe, Frank Zappa.

Just remember, these people didn't give of themselves because they hoped to gain entry into some ethereal Heaven, they did it for its own sake, for pure altruism, and because it's who they wished to be in this world. And to me, that's far more genuine than doing it out of fear of burning in Hell. If someone holds a gun to your head and says, "Worship me or I'll blow your brains out," you're extremely likely to comply. That does not, however, make it an authentic action. It makes it an act of desperation.

So, to the imbecile who made the statement that atheists have never contributed anything to humanity, I say, *be careful, your ignorance and hatred are showing. Is that because you're a Christian?*

Books by Kelli Jae Baeli



AKA INVESTIGATIONS SERIES
Also Known as Armchair Detective {1}
Also Known as DNA {2}
Also Known as Syzygy {3}
Also Known as Rising & Falling {4}
Also Known as Sleepy Cat Peak {5}
Also Known as Blue, Dark & Bright {6}

RAIN FALLS SERIES
Rain Falls {1}
In Absentia {2}
Pariahs & Prodigals {3}

NEW HARBOR WITCHES SERIES
Keepers {1}
Ravens {2}

NORTHWOODS TRILOGY
Throwing Caution {1}
Building Character {2}

SHAMROCK COVE SERIES
Run the Risk (#1)

NOVELS
Achilles Forjan
Another Justice
As You Were
Baggage
Plethora
Pitfall
Go. Leave. Stay.
(with Melissa Walker-Baeli)

NOVELLAS
Saturation Point
Somewhere Else
Quintessence
Random Act of Blindness

Curse of Cache La Poudre
Powerful Things

FICTION ANTHOLOGIES

Trustplaces
(Erotica for Women Who Love Women)
Speed of Dark
(Bold Erotic Stories)
Flash Fiction (Vol. 1)

NONFICTION

God on a Stick {Vol. 1}
(Cosmology of God& Jesus)
God on a Stick {Vol. 2}
(Cosmology of the Bible)
God on a Stick {Vol. 3}
(Cosmology of Christianity)
God on a Stick {Vol. 4}
(Cosmology of the Dark Side)
God on a Stick {Vol. 5}:
(Cosmology of Science)
God on a Stick {Vol. 6}
(Cosmology of Atheism)

NONFICTION ANTHOLOGIES

Nerve
(Selected & Neglected Poetry)
Venetian Blinds
(Because I Couldn't Effing Think of Another Effing Title)
Face Down in the Low Road
(Essays, Articles, & Rebuttals)
Bettered by a Dead Crustacean
(Humorous Essays)
Diction Déjà vu
(Reading Writing & No Arithmetic, vol. 1)
The Truth of Fiction
(Reading Writing & No Arithmetic, vol. 2)
Literary Loitering
(Reading Writing & No Arithmetic, vol. 3)
Sullied Pajamas
(Misadventures in the Dating Pool)
Immortality or Something Like It
(Essays)
Too Much World
(Essays)
Brainmatter: Tidbits from my Cranium
(Essays)
Wear a Helmet

(Inflammatory Essays)
Strictly Academic
(Essays)
Crossing Paths
(Essays)

ON TAP FOR 2017-18
{Untitled, Book 2, Cross Pollination Series}
Synaptic Circus: In the Marrow
(Quips and Quotes from a Bestselling
Genre-Hopping Indie Author)
After Words
(Thoughts on Each of my Novels)
{Untitled, Book 3 in Northwoods Trilogy}
Rain Falls series, Book 4
AKA Investigations series, Book 7
New Harbor Witches series, Book 3

WITH MELISSA WALKER
Life Everywhere
(memoir of our travels)
Frequent Crier Miles
(The Misadventures of No One Famous/

(
A Comedy of Errors)
Cruise Control
(Romantic Family Dramedy
for the over-50 Crowd)
Things to Save America
(Essays from each of us
on ideas for the betterment of society)

REWRITES
Falling Through the Cracks
ISO - In Search Of
(Dating, Relationships & Sex for the Discerning Lesbian)

OTHER WORKS IN PROGRESS
Behind the Left
(Authoring the Apocalypse)
Noble Arcanum
(Sequel to Powerful Things)
The Girls in the Band
(Novella)
Circling Uranus
(Short spoofy Sci-fi story)
Go to kellijaebaeli.com

About the Author

Even after 57 books, Kelli Jae Baeli always tries to write the sort of book she would want to read. She says her favorite thing to do in her novels is take a common trope and turn it on its ear. Where you expect a zig, she gives you a zag. In her pages, you will find strong female characters, ethical dilemmas, realistic romantic storylines often filled with adventure and intense pacing, tempered by witty dialog, and happy endings. All are hallmarks of her work.

Indie publisher and author of 29 bestsellers, Baeli enjoys a sales position in the top 5% of lesbian authors, also penning numerous essays, short stories and silly, serious and vitriolic Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. She and her wife, Melissa, a budding author in her own right, are on their way to a memoir-worthy *Life Everywhere*— traipsing around America in their travel trailer for a year, taking pictures and enjoying all the beautiful things life has to offer.

NOTE to Reader: This Essay included in God on a Stick.

COSMOLOGY OF GOD & JESUS

Education Begets Questions

Cognitive Dissonance

The Quest

The Shift in Consciousness

The Trepidation of a Godless Paradigm

Religion Revealed

So, Why Do We Feel We Need a God?

Seeking Sense

COSMOLOGY OF GOD

How Convenient: Cop-outs about God

Thatness And Whatness

The Omni-Everything

Playing the Part of God: Hannibal Lector

To Er is Human: Mistakes Were Made

God the Father AKA The Godfather

Dash Them Against the Rocks or Eat Them

My God is on PETA's 10 Most Wanted List

Old Abe Never Batted an Eye

God Encourages Human Sacrifice

God Needs Anger-Management

God as Trickster

You are the Devil's Gateway: God the Misogynist

Kinder, Kuche, Kirche

Immaculate Deception: God Raped Mary

Enough Memetic Incredulity

Cosmology Of Jesus

Mary Had a Little Lamb Who Fleeced Us With His Snow

Born Without a Birthday: The When of Jesus

Away in a Manger...er, House...uh Cave?: The Where of Jesus

Not Far From the Tree

The Go-To Guy: Did Jesus Gave Bad Advice?

The Son of God was a Holy Brat

Thus it is Written...NOT: Prophecies of Jesus.

Confusion in the House of David: The Who of Jesus

Jesus, the Spokesmodel for God

The Hashin' of the Christ

Lost in Transliteration

Disease to Diocese

To Rise or Not to Rise: It's All in the Leaven

Eyes Are Bad Witnesses

Imperfect Prefect

COSMOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY

The Seduction of Falsehood

Groupthink

Ignorant, Stupid or Both

Mibber Who?

Roots From A Borrowed Tree

No More Hall-Decking for You Guys

72 Virgins With a Side of Levity

Religion is a Business

Supernatural Hypocrisy

Hedging The Bet

Voluntary Subjugation

Is This Seat Saved?

Sort of a Tired Feeling, Really

"God Said-"

Ask, & You Shall NOT

Ad Hoc Wash

"It's a Mystery Because it's Mysterious."

"God Did It."

Free Swill

Rational Agents, Choosing

The Enigmatic Rapture

The AI of Theists: (Or, "Who's the Pinhead, Now, O'Reilly?")

The Obtusely-Driven Life: "It isn't about you."

The Universal Archetype of Pastor Peanut

Ministry For All

Lies & The Lying Christians Who Tell Them

COSMOLOGY OF THE BIBLE

It's in the Bible...I Think.

The Bible Tells Me So

Alleged Creation

The First Family

The Fall of Man

Oh, Kill Me Now!

The Second Book of Adam & Eve

The Rook of Adam

Apparently you ARE Supposed to Keep Your Brother

The Great Gilgamesh Nut Cow: Or, The Great Flood Fib

The Stuttering Murderer Who Was God's Bitch

The Sword is Still Mightier Than the Pen

The 10 or 14 Afterthoughts

The God-Satan Merger: Downsizing the Corporation of Loyalty

Other Nonsense Found in Job

Kill All the Gay People: Sodom, Gomorrah, the Levite & the Concubine

Hands With Differing Agendas: Biblical Mistranslation & Fraud

Hysterical Historicity

Old as Methuselah

Biblical Brutality
Draconian Laws in the Bible
Old Testament Law of Indiscriminate Murder
Servant of Servants: Slavery in the Bible
Bizarre & Dangerous Scriptures
Eeny Meeny Miney Moe: Prophecies We Didn't Know
The Revelations of Revelation

COSMOLOGY OF THE DARK SIDE: HELL, SATAN & MISGUIDED ADHERENTS

Gnashing of Teeth
The First Spark
The Metaphor of Hell
Cultural Punishment
Vice And Virtue
The Evil Landlord
The Devil is in the Details
Lucifer Who?
The Fall of Satan
Being a Nonsensical Being
Lost Inferno Paradise
Satan, the Ultimate Conspiracy Theory
The Devil in a Red Leotard
Historicity of Christian Complicity
Dirty Laundry
Poisonous Priests & Pastors
Pitiful Saints & Popes
Historically Heinous Pontiffs
Religious Wars & Rumors of Wars
The Clarity of Charity: Inheriting the Earth, Tax-Free
Iconic Colonic: Cleansing the Paragons
Insidious Indoctrination
Father Likes the Furniss
Jesus-Camp
Jael. In a Tent. With a Spike.
"Yes, Hate is Good."
Rap Sheet for God's Assassins
Suffer the Children
Other Kills for Christ
Life is so Sacred, I Will Kill You
Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Reich
Recap

COSMOLOGY OF SCIENCE

Science Heals, Religion Steals
The Anatomy of Adamance*
Cosmology, Cosmogony & Abiogenesis: What & How of the Universe
First Cause & Infinite Regress
One Singular Sensation

Entropy & Thermodynamics
Anthropic Principle
Apples & Oranges...and Watches
Formless and Void, Except for Water
Flatheads Rejoice
Science vs. The Flood
Creationism with a Face-Lift
The God Banana
Rock of Ages
Tectonics & Drift
Geologic Column & Fossil Record
Young Earth Absurdities
Holy Spirit or Darwin's Ghost?
Survival Of The Fittest
Theory but Not Theoretical
Lipstick on a Straw Man
Irreducible Complexity

COSMOLOGY OF ATHEISM

What Good is Faith?
Philosophy, Reason & Intelligence
Logical Fallacies
Antonyms That Vex Us
Unreasonable Ideas
Religion and IQ
Etymology of Ignorance
Herding Cats: The History & Nature of Atheism
Atheism is Myth-Understood
Atheist, Unaware
Benefits of Atheism
Atheists, Skeptics & Infidels, Oh My
What are Atheists like?
Morality Vs. Ethics
Immortal Christians, Immoral Atheists
Morality of the Godless
Infidels Worldwide
Giving Infidels
The Political Machine
Obama, the Foreign Muslim Satanist Antichrist
Separation of Church & State
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