

Atheists who admit they fake it

The impossibility of living authentically without God

Keaton Halley, CMI-US

MANY ATHEISTS ADOPT a double-minded approach to life.¹ They admit that atheism has dark, nihilistic implications which they cannot face squarely. Instead of attempting to consistently live out their worldview, they candidly admit that they *pretend* reality is different than they believe it to be, lying to themselves. It is a clear sign that atheism, not theism, is the irrational position.

Disregard for destiny

A classic example of this phenomenon is found in H.G. Wells' science fiction novella, *The Time Machine*. After traveling to various points in the distant future, the Time Traveler discovers, to his horror, that human society has ultimately collapsed, and mankind has gone extinct. After his return, he reflects on the futility and meaninglessness of human progress which seems doomed to eventually be undone.

In the real world too, mankind is doomed to extinction apart from God's intervention. The science of thermodynamics tells us that the universe is marching inexorably toward 'heat death' and the demise of all life. From an atheistic perspective, with no afterlife and no fixed standard of goodness, every goal we achieve individually or collectively would seem to be arbitrary and pointless, without ultimate significance or value.

What solution might atheists offer to this predicament? Does lying to ourselves help? If life really is meaningless and purposeless, pretending otherwise doesn't make the problem go away.

Human equality—a game of 'make believe'?

In his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, atheist author Yuval Harari takes issue with the U.S. Declaration of Independence and its claim that people were created equal. He objects:

According to the science of biology, people were not 'created'. They have evolved. And they certainly did not evolve to be 'equal'. The idea of equality is inextricably intertwined with the idea of creation. The Americans got the idea of equality from Christianity, which argues that every person has a divinely created soul, and that all souls are equal before God. However, if we do not believe in the Christian myths about God, creation and souls, what does it mean that all people are 'equal'?²

A few paragraphs after the above quote, Harari encourages us to pretend. While denying human equality, he says he wants us to act *as if* we are equal, because this helps to achieve stability in society:

We believe in a particular order not because it is objectively true, but because believing in it enables us to cooperate effectively and forge a better society.³

It apparently never dawns on Harari that, when he treats societal stability and human flourishing as objectively good, they have no foundation within his atheistic system. He consciously steals the idea of equality from the Christian worldview, but unconsciously smuggles in foreign moral values as well. He has not actually presented any compelling reason, from within his atheistic framework, to treat people as equals. Moreover, he readily admits that, when he does treat people as equals, he's faking it!

The noble lie proposal

Philosopher Loyal D. Rue also recognizes the implications of his own atheistic viewpoint. He adamantly insists there is no objective significance or purpose to life but he proposes that humanity must avoid the hopeless outlook of nihilism (i.e. embracing meaninglessness), and instead we must deceive ourselves with a "noble lie":

The option of the noble lie ... first agrees with the nihilists that universal myths describing the origins, nature, and destiny of human existence are pretentious lies but then insists, against the nihilists, that without such lies humanity cannot survive.⁴

Rue proposes that we should trick ourselves into believing a mythology that says life is meaningful, when it really isn't. This is necessary, he says, to avoid the chaos of every man living for himself at one extreme, or else living under totalitarian rule by force.

But other philosophers have explained why this noble lie proposal won't work either.⁵ The more people convince themselves that atheism is true, so needing a noble lie, the less they are able to believe it; it does not work in practice. The suggestion that humanity's best option is to delude ourselves shows Professor Rue should go back to the drawing board.

Christianity embraces the truth

Contrasting strongly with atheism, the Christian worldview makes sense of reality as we experience it. The God who has revealed himself in Scripture is the foundation for objective meaning, morality, human value, consciousness, reason, free will, and more.⁶ Christians don't have to pretend these things exist. They really do exist because God exists and has made the world to be a particular way. Atheists tell us that they live by lies, but Christians are free to be lovers of the truth, serving the God of truth.

Reality is our ally

Not only does Christianity provide meaning, purpose, and hope, it is supported by abundant evidence. Believing in God does not require a leap into the absurd.

CMI exists to share exciting reasons to believe God is real, and that His Word is trustworthy. Through our speaking events, website, videos, social media, and our family magazine, *Creation*, we share how science supports Genesis and the rest of Scripture. There's no need to be ashamed of the Bible!

We encourage you to take advantage of CMI's resources, and to share them with others. They change the lives of real people, like G.Z., who recently said:

I will never forget how the Lord used this ministry to break through my confusion about ... the truth of His

Word, the Bible. Sincere thanks to the many devoted staff and volunteers of CMI.

Praise God that, unlike atheism, the Christian worldview is both reasonable and satisfying.⁷

References and Notes

1. Pearcey, N., *Finding Truth*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2015. This book furnishes many more examples besides those documented in this article.
2. Harari, Y., *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, pp. 109–110, HarperCollins, NY, 2015.
3. Harari, ref. 2.
4. Rue, L.D., *By the Grace of Guile: The Role of Deception*

in *Natural History and Human Affairs*, p. 5, Oxford University Press, 1994.

5. Craig, W.L., *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd Edition, pp. 84–86, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2008.
6. Free will here refers to the idea that people have genuine agency in general, not addressing debates over how salvation is accomplished (monergism vs synergism).
7. A more comprehensive version of this article will appear on creation.com in due course.

Join us in sharing the Creation-Gospel message with the younger generation



By Ross Peeters,
Managing Director

‘Science’ is a huge issue for young people’s faith and belief in the Bible. In fact, studies show it is the top obstacle to faith,¹ with young people believing that “The church seems to reject much of what science tells us about the world.”²

Social media is by far the biggest digital space where young people spend their time, with a recent study showing the average 16–24-year-old spends over 2½ hours on social media every day.³ It is one of their top information sources,⁴ with video being the most popular content type.³

Last year we produced a year’s worth of daily video content, sharing it on Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, and TikTok. The results have been incredible, exceeding all our expectations!

In the ten or so months since we launched this project (at time of writing) the videos have received:

- Over 12 million viewers
- Almost 50 million video views
- Several videos have gone viral reaching over 1M+ views each
- 1.6+ million likes

- 220,000+ shares
 - Over 130,000 new ‘followers’.
- Every interaction represents a person engaging in some way in their faith journey. The Holy Spirit continues to do His work in the lives of these viewers. We are just scattering seeds; it is God who makes them grow!

“What a fantastic video. This has my brain reconfiguring the way it considers reality. Thank you.”
—@bretta2901, YouTube

“This has just restored my lost Christian faith in God and resurrection. Brilliant!”—@iako, YouTube

“I am a geologist. And this is making me rethink.”—ack975, YouTube

THE VISION: WHAT’S NEXT?

Firstly, we desire to *continue* producing daily creation video content for social media. Currently funded content will finish in June.

Secondly, we want to *increase* our efforts:

- Double the number of topics covered in a year

47 MILLION REASONS TO KEEP THE PROJECT GOING



- Double the number of long-form videos we produce (releasing weekly, instead of fortnightly)
- Produce additional (weekly) mid-length content
- Increase the range of speakers and topics.

WILL YOU PARTNER WITH US?!

We absolutely need your help to continue providing this high-quality, social media content. Video production is very expensive. We aim to raise AU\$460,000 which will provide these engaging, daily snippets of curated creation content across our social media channels. If this resonates with you, please donate using the enclosed response slip, online at creation.com/donate, or scan the QR code. To learn more about the project, please visit creation.com/smvp. Thank you for joining us as we share the Creation-Gospel message to thousands across Australia and millions around the world.



REFERENCES

1. Barna Group, *The Connected Generation—Australia/New Zealand Report*, p. 21, 2019.
2. Barna Group, *Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z*, barna.com, 24 Jan 2018.
3. DataReportal, *The Time We Spend on Social Media*, datareportal.com, 31 Jan 2024.
4. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022*, p. 42, 2022.

Ministry Calendar

Events in NSW

Friday 7—Monday 10 June 2024,
Sydney ministry with Dr Ron Neller

Dates Still Available

- ▶ Saturday 8 June, 2.30pm, public meeting, Glenorie Mission Church, 49 Arcadia Rd, Galston.
- ▶ Sunday, 9 June, 10:00 am Southside Church, 10 Kiama St, Miranda

Friday 19—Monday 22 July 2024,
Sydney ministry with Dr Ron Neller

Dates Still Available

Events in QLD

Friday 7—Sunday 9 June 2024,
Rockhampton ministry with Steve Müller

Dates Still Available

- ▶ Sunday 9 June, 6.30pm, Mustard Seed Prayer and Fellowship Rockhampton, 343 Yaamba Rd, Park Avenue.
- ▶ Sunday, 9 June, 10:30 am Viti Wesleyan Methodist Church, 35 Rundle St, Rockhampton.

Friday 7 June—Monday 10 June 2024,
Fraser Coast ministry with Dr Mark Harwood

Dates Still Available

- ▶ Sunday 9 June, 9.30am, Victory Church Maryborough, 5 Fazio Rd, St Helens.
- ▶ Sunday, 28 July, 9.30am Caloundra CityLife Baptist Church, 7 Gregson Pl, Caloundra. (RN)
- ▶ Sunday, 4 August, 9.30 am Connect Church, Hickey Road, Caboolture. (RN)

Friday 9—Sunday 11 August 2024,
Toowoomba ministry with Dr Ron Neller

- ▶ Sunday, 11 August, 9.30 am Kingsthorpe Church of Christ, Corner of North & East Sts, Kingsthorpe.
- ▶ Sunday, 11 August, 5.00 pm Toowoomba Community Baptist Church, 100 Glenvale Rd, Harristown.

Saturday 10—Sunday 11 August 2024,
Bundaberg ministry with Steve Müller

Dates Still Available

- ▶ Saturday 17 August, 5.00pm, public meeting, Munruben Church of Christ, 1794 Chambers Flat Rd, Munruben. (TW)

Events in VIC

Friday 14—Monday 17 June 2024,
Melbourne ministry with Dr Tas Walker

Dates Still Available

- ▶ Sunday, 16 June, 10.00am Mount Evelyn Presbyterian Church, 30-36 Birmingham Rd, Mount Evelyn.
- ▶ Sunday, 16 June, 2.00pm New Life Christian Fellowship, 234 Elgar Rd, Box Hill South.

DB—Dr Don Batten • RN—Dr Ron Neller
TW—Dr Tas Walker • MH—Dr Mark Harwood
SM—Steve Müller • NC—Neville Chamberlain
Events are current at time of going to press (May 2024). Please check creation.com/calendar closer to the event for any changes to the information provided.