



**Introduction to  
Christian Education**

A set of three papers

**Paper Two**

**Culture of Death?**

Secularism and its  
Consequences for Family and  
Society

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**PART ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

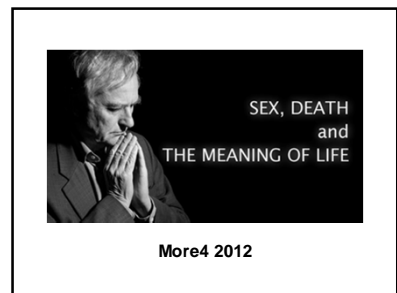
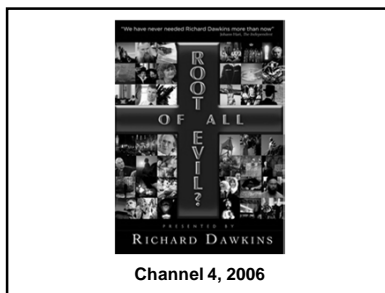
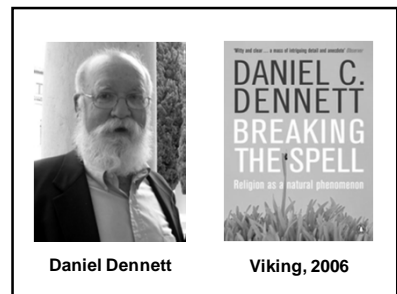
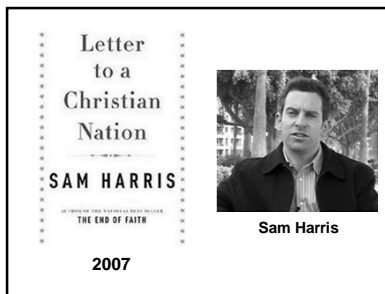
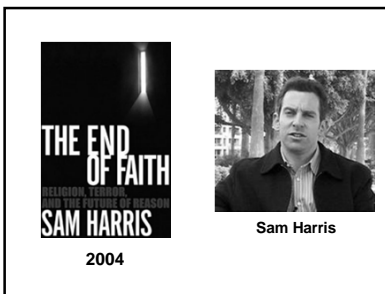
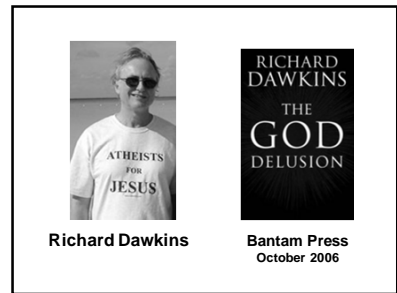
**Is Religion Dangerous?**

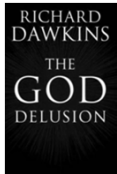
**New Atheists**



**Richard Dawkins**      **Sam Harris**      **Christopher Hitchens**







**RICHARD DAWKINS**  
**THE GOD DELUSION**


“[Religion] fuels war, foments bigotry and abuses children.” (front cover flap)

Bantam Press  
October 2006



**Is Secularism Harmless?**

**Aren't the new atheists rather extreme?**



**Eric**

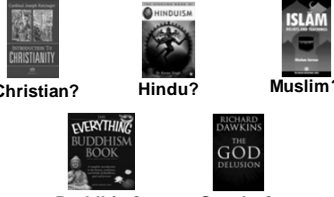
Aged 18, in 1999 he killed himself.

“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.”  
(Eric's notebook, 12 June 1998)

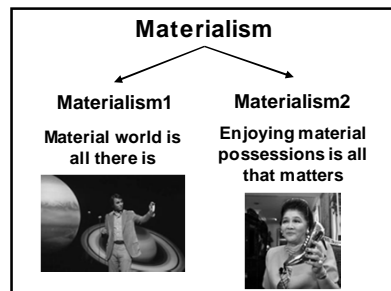
**Secularists also face hard questions**

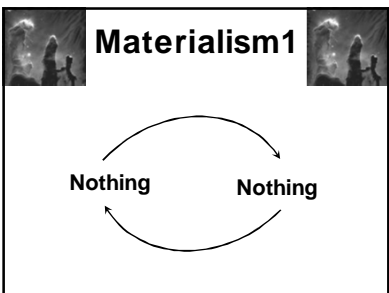
**Which Kind of Secularism?**

**So which story is being told?**



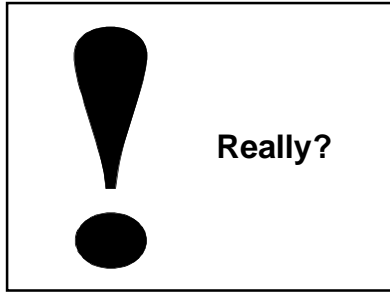
Christian? Hindu? Muslim?  
Buddhist? Secular?





Many Christians appear unaware of the extent to which materialistic assumptions now shape people and society.

Many atheists find it very difficult to accept – to believe – what it would *really* mean to be in a godless world.



**Materialism is False**

It is untenable as a philosophy and as a basis for any science.

It cannot accommodate many features that have foundational significance for human life.

But hasn't modern science (Darwinian evolution) shown that materialism is true?

**Darwinism**

Darwinism, for both its original author and its leading modern proponents, is *the* materialistic theory of evolution

**Richard Dawkins**


"It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)"  
(Dawkins, 2004)

**Thomas Nagel**




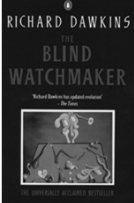

(b. 1937) (OUP, 2012)

**Thomas Nagel**




“I realize that such doubts will strike many people as outrageous, but that is because almost everyone in our secular culture has been browbeaten into regarding the reductive research program as sacrosanct, on the ground that anything else would not be science.”

(Nagel, 2012: 7)





**Richard Dawkins**


1986




**Richard Dawkins**



“An atheist before Darwin could have said, following Hume: “I have no explanation for complex biological design. All I know is that God isn't a good explanation, so we must wait and hope that somebody comes up with a better one.” I can't help feeling that such a position, though logically sound, would have left one feeling pretty unsatisfied, ...





**Richard Dawkins**



... and that although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”

(Dawkins 1986: 6)





**Richard Dawkins**

2009

Evolution:  
“the greatest show on earth,  
the only game in town”

**Thomas Nagel**



“... as it is usually presented, the current orthodoxy about the cosmic order is the product of governing assumptions that are unsupported, and that it flies in the face of common sense.”

(Nagel, 2012: 5)

**PART TWO**


**INDOCTRINATION TODAY**

**London Zoo**

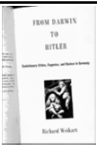


**“A lot of people think humans are above other animals. When they see humans as animals here, it kind of reminds us that we're not that special.”**


Thomas Mahoney (inmate of the Human Zoo 2005)



**Richard Weikart**




2004



2009

**Celebrity Culture**



**Scarlett Johansson**



Scarlett Johansson

"I do think on some basic level we are animals, and by instinct we kind of breed accordingly ... But as much as I believe that, I work really hard when I'm in a relationship to make it work in a monogamous way."


**Sienna Miller**

Sienna & Jude Law

"Monogamy is a weird thing to me. It's overrated because, let's face it, we're all f\*\*\*ing animals. The fact is, no one is perfect."

**Will Smith**



Will & Jada Pinkett

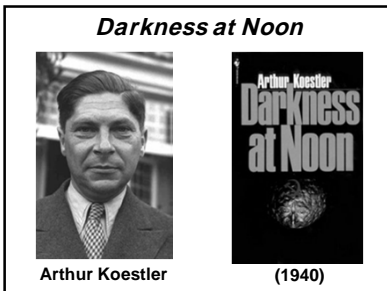
"Our perspective is you don't avoid what's natural. You're going to be attracted to people. In our marriage vows, we didn't say 'forsaking all others'. ...

**Will Smith**



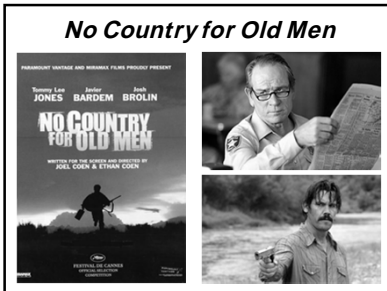
... If it came down to it, then one can say to the other, 'Look, I need to have sex with somebody. I'm not going to if you don't approve of it - but please approve of it'."

**Arthur Koestler**  
*Darkness at Noon*



**Ivanov:** "Every year several million people are killed quite pointlessly by epidemics and other natural catastrophes. And we should shrink from sacrificing a few hundred thousand for the most promising experiment in history?"

**No Country for Old Men**




**Carla:** You don't have to do this.  
**Anton:** People always say the same thing.  
**Carla:** What do they say?  
**Anton:** They say, "You don't have to do this."  
**Carla:** You don't.  
**Anton:** Okay.  
*[He flips a coin]*  
**Anton:** This is the best I can do. Call it.

**Carla:** I knew you was crazy when I saw you sitting there. I knew exactly what was in store for me.  
**Anton:** Call it.  
**Carla:** No, I ain't gonna call it.  
**Anton:** Call it.  
**Carla:** The coin don't have no say. It's just you.  
**Anton:** Well, I got here the same way the coin did.

**Lawrence Krauss**  
**"You are all stardust"**

**Lawrence Krauss**


**"You are all stardust ... the elements ... that matter for evolution ... were created in the nuclear furnaces of stars ..."**



**Lawrence Krauss**

... and the only way they could get into your body is if those stars were kind enough to explode. So, forget Jesus. The stars died so that you could be here today.”

(Krauss, 2009)



**Lawrence Krauss**

... and the only way they could get into your body is if those stars were kind enough to explode. So, forget Jesus. The stars died so that you could be here today.”


(Krauss, 2009)

**Harry Kroto**  
 Religious people “don’t have the intellectual integrity to teach science”



**Michael Reiss**  
 (b 1960)

Professor of Science Education,  
 University of London



**Sir Harry Kroto FRS**  
 (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1996)

“He, together with all religious people ... fall at the first hurdle of the main requirement for honest scientific discussion because they accept unfound dogma as having fundamental significance ...”



(Guardian, 28/9/2008)

**Richard Dawkins**  
*Let’s All Stop Beating Basil’s Car*


**Fawlty Towers**




**John Cleese as Basil Fawlty**

**Richard Dawkins**




*My Dangerous Idea*

*Let’s all stop beating Basil’s car*


“Why do we not react in the same way to a defective man? ... Isn’t the murderer or the rapist just a machine with a defective component? Or a defective upbringing? Defective education? Defective genes? ...”



Richard Dawkins 

... Why is it that we humans find it almost impossible to accept such conclusions? Why do we vent such visceral hatred on child murderers, or on thuggish vandals, when we should simply regard them as faulty units that need fixing or replacing?"


(The Edge Annual Question, 2006)

Richard Dawkins 

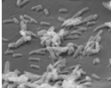
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(The Edge Annual Question, 2006)

**Eric Pianka**  
 "We're no better than bacteria"

 **Dr Eric Pianka**  
 2006 Distinguished Texas Scientist  
 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006

"We're no better than bacteria."



Dr Eric Pianka  

He argued that there are too many people. He believes that the human population needs to be reduced by 90%. War and famine are too slow; an Ebola plague would be ideal.

(Texas Academy of Science, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006)



 **Pianka was reported to Homeland Security as a bio-terrorist and interviewed by FBI officials in April 2006!**




"You must keep your religion out of your professional work"

In almost every professional training today there is an explicit or implicit message:

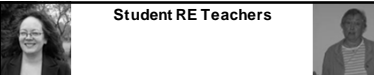
"In order to be professional and objective you must not bring your religion or personal values into your public, professional work."

 **Student RE Teachers** 

"The majority of Christian RE students believe that sharing their faith with pupils could influence pupils and this could be unprofessional."

(Revell & Walters 2010:4)



Student RE Teachers




“the majority of agnostic or atheist students assumed that not only was it acceptable for them to share their absence of faith with pupils but that this sharing could have a positive impact on learning in the classroom.”

(Revell & Walters 2010: 23)

Professor Trevor Cooling





Professor Trevor Cooling




“In the case of those who identified themselves as Christians, a consensus emerged that they had to be careful not to let their own private beliefs influence the pupils; that was not considered objective. Essentially, they saw their beliefs as a problem to be managed. However in the case of those that were atheist or agnostic there was a

Professor Trevor Cooling



contrasting consensus; these students thought that their beliefs enhanced their professionalism. In other words their atheist beliefs contributed to their being objective RE teachers because they didn't have a *religious* belief. In their case they viewed their atheistic beliefs as an asset to be

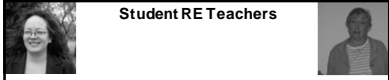
Professor Trevor Cooling



tapped. This was only a small scale project and as such one cannot generalize from it. Further research is necessary. But it does indicate the existence of a mindset within contemporary education which is influencing students.”

(Cooling, 2011: 4)

Student RE Teachers





“A secular, atheist or agnostic belief position ... should be recognised by all students as an identifiable belief position rather than as a neutral stance.”


(Revell & Walters 2010: 4)

“Agnostic, atheist and radical / liberal faith positions have also to be acknowledged as potential hindrances to the educational process.” (*ibid*: 9)


Signe Sandmark

(Signe Sandmark *Is World View Neutral Education Possible and Desirable?* Paternoster, 2006)




“In order to be ‘professional’ a Christian teacher must not talk about God as if he exists, must not pray with pupils, must not say that there are objective moral norms, and must not teach science as if natural things are designed.”




In order to be similarly ‘neutral’, ‘objective’ and ‘professional’, what should an atheist or agnostic teacher do, or not do?

(1) Nothing

**Graham Haydon**



(1994)



(1997)


Graham Haydon

"... it is simply 'not done' to bring one's religion, or views based on it, into any public sphere. But a society in which this kind of secularism reigns, even though not enforced by law, is surely not one in which it can be said that all persons are equally respected; it means,


Graham Haydon

effectively, that some people are being silenced on matters of central importance to them."  
 (Haydon 1994: 70)


(2) Teach in a way that *hides their real beliefs*





William Kay



Leslie Francis




University of Wales Press 1996





"Today much of the world of adulthood is characterized by the secular rather than by the religious ... The socialization process is persistently and inevitably drawing young people into the ethos of that post-Christian world. In this sense, to be irreligious is to be normal."  
 (Kay & Francis 1996: 144)

**Does it matter?**




✓ Unbelieving parents succeed in passing on their unbelief to almost 100% of their children




Prof David Voas  
 Manchester University  
 (ESRC 2005)

**Does it matter?**




✗ Believing parents pass on their faith to barely 50% of their children




(One believing parent – 25%)

**Lesslie Newbigin**  
(1909-1998)




Theologian, pastor, author, limerick writer, rock climber and prophet

**Lesslie Newbigin**




“Even in homes where the parents are committed Christians, it is hard, to the point of impossibility, for children to sustain belief in the meta-narrative of the Bible over against that understanding of the meta-narrative – the picture of the origins and development of nature, of human society as a whole – which is being offered to them at school. It is possible to maintain the ...

**Lesslie Newbigin**




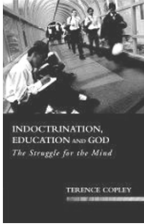
... telling of the biblical story in the privacy of home and church, but in so far as this story contradicts the meta-narrative of the schools, young people are placed in an impossible situation. ... A belief which is permitted only to exist in a bunker may survive for a time, but it must finally be obliterated.” (Faith and Power, SPCK, 1998: 158-9)

**Professor Terence Copley**




Professor of Educational Studies (Religious Education), University of Oxford  
(d. January 2011)

**Professor Terence Copley**


*Indoctrination, Education and God: The Struggle for the Mind* (SPCK, 2005)

**Professor Terence Copley**




“... a secular indoctrination process is at work in British and European society, programming people against religious belief ... People in Britain are frequently negative, even hostile, towards institutional Christianity, ...

**Professor Terence Copley**




... while at the same time being less critical of ‘other religions’ (except perhaps Islam), even more uncritical towards alternative spiritualities and, finally, completely uncritical of secular values.”  
(*Indoctrination, Education and God: The Struggle for the Mind*, SPCK, 2005, page vii)

**Sir Walter Moberly (1881-1974)**




Philosopher and University Administrator



(SCM, 1949)

**Sir Walter Moberly**



“If in your organization, your curriculum, and your communal customs and ways of life, you leave God out, you teach with tremendous force that, for most people and at most times, He does not count ... It is a fallacy to suppose that by omitting a subject you teach nothing about it. On the contrary you teach that it is to be ....

Sir Walter Moberly



... omitted, and that it is therefore a matter of secondary importance. And you teach this not openly and explicitly, which would invite criticism; you simply take it for granted and thereby insinuate it silently, insidiously, and all but irresistibly. If indoctrination is bad, this sort of conditioning and ...

Sir Walter Moberly



... preconscius habituation is surely worse .... If a planner of atheistic conviction and Machiavellian astuteness had been at work, he could hardly have wrought more cunningly."

*The Crisis in the University*. London, SCM, 1949, page 56

Sir Walter Moberly



"Our predicament then is this. Most students go through our universities without ever having been forced to exercise their minds on the issues which are really momentous. Under the guise of academic neutrality they are subtly conditioned to unthinking acquiescence in the social and ....

Sir Walter Moberly



... political *status quo* and in a secularism on which they have never seriously reflected .... Fundamentally they are uneducated."

*The Crisis in the University*. London, SCM, 1949, page 70

## Conclusion to Part Two

- secular assumptions are universal and all-pervasive
- those assumptions are almost never declared, or put forward for examination
- we and our children are being *indoctrinated*

### Does it matter?

The New Atheists accuse religion of being harmful,

but what about secular materialism?

Is it harmful?

## Part Three Secular Materialism *is* Dangerous

## Genocide in South West Africa

**Imperial Germany**



**General  
Lothar  
von Trotha**  
(1848- 1920)

In 1904 von Trotha ordered the complete destruction of the Herero tribe in South West Africa. In his diary he referred to the Herero as *Unmenschen* – non-humans.



**Herero Tribe**



**Samuel Maharero, 1853-1923, Herero Chief**

**Herero Survivors...**



...after escaping through the Kalahari Desert

**Columbine**  
“only science and math are true”

**Eric David Harris**  
(1981-1999)



**Columbine**





Eric was one of two boys who shot 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School, Colorado, USA, on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1999.



“just because your mommy and daddy told you blood and violence is bad, you think it's a f—g law of nature? wrong, only science and math are true, everything, and I mean every f—g thing else is Man made.” (Eric's notebook, 21 April 1998)



**Eric Harris**

“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.”

(Eric’s notebook, 12 June 1998)

**Materialism and Education**

Where – how – did Eric learn this?

What are *our* children learning in school?

Education and the media are never neutral.

Is the ‘hidden curriculum’ of school and media that of materialism?

**Materialism and Education**

Will they – like Eric – absorb materialism and conclude that truth and morality are just some people’s opinions they can choose to accept or reject?


**Does it matter?**

**Could it be harmful?**

**Jeffrey Dahmer**


“No one to be accountable to”

**Jeffrey Dahmer (1960-1994)**



American serial killer who murdered and dismembered 17 young men and boys, in some cases eating parts of their body.

**Lionel & Shari Dahmer**





**Jeffrey Dahmer**

“He felt that he was up – up from the slime, as he put it. You know, molecules to amoebas to Larry type of a thing, evolution. That there was nothing, no direction by a god. No one to be accountable to. No one to answer to at all.”

(Father, Lionel Dahmer, 17 June 2004 interview on *Larry King Live*, CNN)

**German Cannibal**

**Armin Meiwes**  
(b 1961)

**Bernd Brandes**

In Rotenburg in 2001 Meiwes killed and ate a man he met through a website.

**Pekka-Eric Auvinen**

“There is no higher authority than me”

**Pekka-Eric Auvinen (18)**




**Jokela high school, Finland**  
07 November 2007  
8 killed

**Matti Saari (22)**




Kauhajoki college, Finland  
23 September 2008  
10 killed

"I, as a natural selector, will eliminate all who I see unfit, disgraces of human race and failures of natural selection."  
"humanity is overrated"  
"it's time to put natural selection and survival of the fittest back on tracks."  
"I am the law, judge and executioner. There is no higher authority than me."


Materialism declares that only physical nature exists and so it is not possible to speak about purpose, goodness and wickedness. Evil is an illusion.  
Moral assertions hook on to ....*Nothing*.

At the end of the day there are simply animals that are struggling to survive. Nature is blind and pitiless.

Many atheists find it very difficult to accept – to believe – what it would *really* mean to be in a godless world.



**Richard Dawkins**  
"We have the power to defy the selfish genes"

**Richard Dawkins**





"We are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We alone on earth can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators."  
(*The Selfish Gene*, OUP, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 1989, page 201)

**John Gray**

(b 1948) (Granta, 2002)

**John Gray**

"Humanists turn to Darwin to support their shaky modern faith in progress; but there is no progress in the world he revealed. A truly naturalistic view of the world leaves no room for secular hope. ... Humanism is a secular religion thrown together from decaying scraps of Christian myth."  
(Gray 2002: xii, 31)



**The Problem of Evil**

A very real problem .... for Christians  
 For materialists, the problem doesn't exist – they can say nothing by way of explanation or comfort  
 For them, there is neither good nor evil. What happens is what happens. What animals do is what animals do. There is nothing more to be said.

**CONCLUSION:**  
**What do we teach the children?**

**Education in a Materialist World**



Richard Peters  
 (1919-2011)  
 Professor of the Philosophy of Education, Institute of Education, University of London

Richard S. Peters



“Our basic predicament in life is to learn to live with its ultimate pointlessness. We are monotonously reminded that education must be for life, so obviously the most important dimension of education is that in which we learn to come to terms with the pointlessness of life.” (Peters 1973:1)

**Secular Materialism is *very dangerous***

**How, then, should we live and teach?**

Shouldn't secularists consider worldview stories that make real and liveable sense of the human condition?

Shouldn't Christians live and teach as if God exists and faith is relevant to all of life and to every aspect of education?

**Culture of Death?**



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