

## **God Help Us: Atheism Becomes Largest Religion in U.S.**

I cannot substantiate the validity of the preceding statement. It appeared in the April 7, 2019 issue of **The Daily Wire**, and was written by Michael Knowles. I certainly hope the statement paints a worse picture than reality would suggest. However, the author cited many troubling statistics which prove that Atheism is rapidly spreading — not only in the world in general, but here in America where freedom of religion, from its beginning, has been taken for granted. And they also harmonize with an article written by Gabe Bullard in April, 2016, an article entitled “**The World’s Newest Major Religion: No Religion.**” Again, I am not able to verify or deny Bullard’s affirmation, but I was troubled by the following statement he made, and which facts seem to validate; he said: “There have been predictions that religion would fade from relevancy as the world modernizes, but all the recent surveys are finding that it’s happening startlingly fast.” If this statement is true, it does not bode well for the future!

As Atheism grows, society is more and more beset by woes. With this in mind, please note the following statements penned by Mr. Knowles:

*“As religiosity has declined, social ills have abounded. Nearly one in five American adults suffers from anxiety disorders, which now constitute the most common mental illness in the country. One in six Americans takes anti-depressant drugs, a 65% surge over just 15 years. The problem is particularly acute among younger American. While depression diagnoses have increased 33% since 2013 the number is up 47% among Millennials and 63% among teenagers. Coincidentally, suicide rates among American teenagers have increased by 70% since 2006. American life expectancy declined again last year, as Americans continue to drug and kill themselves at record rates.”*

In direct contrast to the troubling news regarding the decline of religion, Mr. Knowles stated that “Social scientists have long established the link between religiosity and life satisfaction.” With that in mind, please note the following statements made by Mr. Knowles with regards to conclusions reached by “social scientists:”

*“People who attend religious services several times a week are nearly twice as likely as those who worship less than once a month to describe themselves as ‘very happy.’” “Religious people are also significantly more likely to engage in happy-making behaviors, such as getting and staying married.” “A study released in 2017 affirms what countless others had already shown: married couples report higher life satisfaction than their single, divorced, and widowed neighbors. That satisfaction tends to last beyond the honeymoon and well into old age.” “A materialistic culture worships wealth; a licentious culture worships sex; a godly culture worships God.”*

Students of history, both biblical and secular, have long recognized the link between faith and morals, and between faith and human happiness. Consider, for example, the contrast between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges. In Joshua, a God-fearing, obedient people conquered the land of Canaan and were so abundantly blessed by God. However, after the death of Joshua and “*the days of the elders who outlived Joshua,*” another “*generation rose...who did not know the Lord;*” hence, “*the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals,*” Josh. 2:10-11, Faith gave way to unbelief, which brought on idolatry of almost indescribable proportions, which resulted in gross immorality, and the Israelites repeatedly being defeated by

surrounding idolatrous people. Study the history of the Jewish nation and you will doubtlessly become impressed with the link between people's faith in God and their morality; conversely, you will likewise become impressed with the link between their lack of faith and their lack of morals.

Looking to the New Testament; specifically to Romans 1:20-32, we read of a people who once "*knew God*" but who ceased to "*glorify Him as God.*" Professing themselves "*to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things,*" resulting in God giving "*them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,*" Rom. 1:21-24. When they lost their faith they lost their **morals**! Regardless of the time or culture, there has always been a link between faith and morals, and a corresponding link between unbelief and immorality. "Social scientists" in our modern world who compile statistics between faith and morals, and between a loss of faith and a loss of human happiness are simply discovering a phenomenon long recognized by both students of the Bible and students of history in general.

Some of us remember when we took it for granted that nearly everyone believed in God and it seemed that everyone believed the Bible to be the word of God. Some of us also remember when the school day would begin with the reading of a few verses from the Bible and prayer, but, sadly, that day has long since passed. Sadly, many modern progressives are trying to infiltrate the curriculum in public schools with the philosophy of secular humanism. And secular humanists are consistent in their affirmations that: (1) We evolved; we were not created by an omnipotent, omniscient God, and (2) that situation ethics (not the word of God) determines our conduct. This leads to an "anything goes," "might makes right," "get all the gusto you can" (regardless of who it affects) code of misconduct.

Ironically, however, the ones who have least cause to be atheists are those with a good education! Every educated person knows that "from nothing **nothing** comes," and that "something **is**; therefore something **was.**" That first cause that caused everything else had to be either **mind** or matter. And the whole experience of mankind is that **mind** is greater than matter. Therefore the first cause that caused everything else had to be **mind** and not matter, but in view of the complexity of matter the mind that created matter had to possess the attributes the Bible ascribes to **God**! Then, too, consider the Bible. It contains many scientific facts which were not discovered by modern science until centuries **after** they were written! Also think about prophecy and its precise fulfillment! An examination of the facts should convince any fair-minded person of two things: (1) God exists and (2) The Bible is the word of God!

Indeed, we are living in "*perilous times*" (2 Tim. 3:1); unbelief abounds, and atheism reportedly is becoming the fastest growing religion in the U.S. and the world in general. But we must not allow this to cause us to be ashamed of our faith, or influence us to be silent about our faith. Regardless of statistics, faithful Christians are always on the "winning team," finding happiness in this life and salvation in the life to come. Let us be among the "*few*" who enter the "*narrow*" gate and the "*difficult way which leads to life,*" Matt. 7:14, **and** let us do our best to make that "*few*" as **many** as possible!

—B. Witherington

\*\*\*