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# The God Virus How Religion Infects Our Lives And Culture Darrel Ray

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## **SANTOS GWENDOLYN**

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Is God a Virus? Prometheus Books  
Christopher Hitchens, described in the London Observer as “one of the most prolific, as well as brilliant, journalists of our time” takes on his biggest subject yet—the increasingly dangerous role of religion in the world. In the tradition of Bertrand Russell’s *Why I Am Not a Christian* and Sam Harris’s recent bestseller, *The End Of Faith*, Christopher Hitchens makes the ultimate case against religion. With a close and erudite reading of the major religious texts, he

documents the ways in which religion is a man-made wish, a cause of dangerous sexual repression, and a distortion of our origins in the cosmos. With eloquent clarity, Hitchens frames the argument for a more secular life based on science and reason, in which hell is replaced by the Hubble Telescope’s awesome view of the universe, and Moses and the burning bush give way to the beauty and symmetry of the double helix.

**Virus as a Summons to Faith** John Wiley & Sons

The “brilliantly realized” (The New York Times Book Review) breakthrough novel from visionary author Neal Stephenson, a modern classic that predicted the metaverse and inspired generations of

Silicon Valley innovators Hiro lives in a Los Angeles where franchises line the freeway as far as the eye can see. The only relief from the sea of logos is within the autonomous city-states, where law-abiding citizens don't dare leave their mansions. Hiro delivers pizza to the mansions for a living, defending his pies from marauders when necessary with a matched set of samurai swords. His home is a shared 20 X 30 U-Stor-It. He spends most of his time goggled in to the Metaverse, where his avatar is legendary. But in the club known as The Black Sun, his fellow hackers are being felled by a weird new drug called Snow Crash that reduces them to nothing more than a jittering cloud of bad digital karma (and IRL, a vegetative state). Investigating the Infocalypse leads Hiro

all the way back to the beginning of language itself, with roots in an ancient Sumerian priesthood. He'll be joined by Y.T., a fearless teenaged skateboard courier. Together, they must race to stop a shadowy virtual villain hell-bent on world domination.

**Baseball as a Road to God** Univ of California Press

The New York Times bestselling memoir about identity, love and understanding. Now a major motion picture starring Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, and Lucas Hedges, directed by Joel Edgerton. "Every sentence of the story will stir your soul" (O Magazine). The son of a Baptist pastor and deeply embedded in church life in small town Arkansas, as a young man Garrard Conley was terrified and conflicted about his sexuality. When

Garrard was a nineteen-year-old college student, he was outed to his parents, and was forced to make a life-changing decision: either agree to attend a church-supported conversion therapy program that promised to "cure" him of homosexuality; or risk losing family, friends, and the God he had prayed to every day of his life. Through an institutionalized Twelve-Step Program heavy on Bible study, he was supposed to emerge heterosexual, ex-gay, cleansed of impure urges and stronger in his faith in God for his brush with sin. Instead, even when faced with a harrowing and brutal journey, Garrard found the strength and understanding to break out in search of his true self and forgiveness. By confronting his buried past and the burden of a life lived in

shadow, Garrard traces the complex relationships among family, faith, and community. At times heart-breaking, at times triumphant, *Boy Erased* is a testament to love that survives despite all odds.

#### [The Invention of Religion](#) Ips - Profile Books

An essential feature of religious experience across many cultures is the intuitive feeling of God's presence. More than any rituals or doctrines, it is this experience that anchors religious faith, yet it has been largely ignored in the scientific literature on religion. Starting with a vivid narrative account of the life-threatening hike that triggered his own mystical experience, biologist John Wathey takes the reader on a scientific journey to find the sources of religious

feeling and the illusion of God's presence. His book delves into the biological origins of this compelling feeling, attributing it to innate neural circuitry that evolved to promote the mother-child bond. Dr. Wathey, a veteran neuroscientist, argues that evolution has programmed the infant brain to expect the presence of a loving being who responds to the child's needs. As the infant grows into adulthood, this innate feeling is eventually transferred to the realm of religion, where it is reactivated through the symbols, imagery, and rituals of worship. The author interprets our various conceptions of God in biological terms as illusory supernormal stimuli that fill an emotional and cognitive vacuum left over from infancy. These insights shed

new light on some of the most vexing puzzles of religion, like the popular belief in a god who is judgmental and punishing, yet also unconditionally loving; the extraordinary tenacity of faith; the greater religiosity of women relative to men; religious obsessions with sex; the mysterious compulsion to pray; the seemingly irrepressible feminine attributes of God, even in traditionally patriarchal religions; and the strange allure of cults. Finally, Dr. Wathey considers the hypothesis that religion evolved to foster reproductive success, arguing that, in an age of potentially ruinous overpopulation, magical thinking has become a luxury we can no longer afford, one that distracts us from urgent threats to our planet. Deeply researched yet elegantly

written in a jargon-free and accessible style, this book presents a compelling interpretation of the evolutionary origins of spirituality and religion.

Boy Erased Princeton University Press

Why bother with the interpretive categories of biblical faith when in fact our energy and interest are focused on more immediate matters? The answer is simple and obvious. We linger because, in the midst of our immediate preoccupation with our felt jeopardy and our hope for relief, our imagination does indeed range beyond the immediate to larger, deeper wonderments. Our free-ranging imagination is not finally or fully contained in the immediacy of our stress, anxiety, and jeopardy. Beyond these demanding immediacies, we have a deep sense that our life is not fully

contained in the cause-and-effect reasoning of the Enlightenment that seeks to explain and control. There is more than that and other than that to our life in God's world!

*Atheist Universe* Fordham Univ Press

Why did America do so badly? When the COVID-19 crisis reached America, the US had more resources and expertise at its disposal to confront the threat than any nation on the planet, and yet the American response was homicidally inefficient. Why? In this book, I argue that the root of the problem is America's religiosity. A crisis that only science could meet threatened to expose the impotence of religious claims, and religious leaders and institutions went on the attack. Any hope of a rational, scientifically informed response was

crippled by a presidential administration elected by religious zealots, staffed by religious zealots, and beholden to religious zealots. But their malfeasance was not limited to the political arena. From churches ignoring state lockdowns, to televangelists declaring the disease miraculously eradicated, to pastors suing their governors for enforcing public safety measures, religion was at the forefront of virtually every misguided step towards catastrophe that the nation took. When science eventually solves this problem, religions will be quick to thank their gods for the scientist's labor and forgive themselves their trespasses. We cannot afford to give them such easy absolution. Their disastrous contributions to our national pandemic response are a

potent reminder that a nation in the twenty-first century can ill afford to let anyone compete with science in the realm of truth.

#### Where is God in a Coronavirus World?

John Hunt Publishing

Alister E. McGrath is one of the world's leading theologians, with a doctorate in the sciences. Richard Dawkins is one of the bestselling popular science writers, with outspoken and controversial views on religion. This fascinating and provoking work is the first book-length response to Dawkins' ideas, and offers an ideal introduction to the topical issues of science and religion. Addresses fundamental questions about Dawkins' approach to science and religion: Is the gene actually selfish? Is the blind watchmaker a suitable analogy? Are

there other ways of looking at things? Tackles Dawkins' hostile and controversial views on religion, and examines the religious implications of his scientific ideas, making for a fascinating and provoking debate

Written in a very engaging and accessible style, ideal to those approaching scientific and religious issues for the first time Alister McGrath is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is one of the world's best known and most respected theologians, with a strong research background in molecular biophysics A superb book by one of the world's leading theologians, which will attract wide interest in the growing popular science market, similar to Susan Blackmore's *The Meme Machine* (1999).

**God, the Invisible King** Ipc Press

Using logic, common sense, philosophy, ethics, history, and science, the author rebuts every argument that claims to "prove" the existence of God. IS THERE REALLY A GOD? OR DOES GOD EXIST ONLY IN OUR HEADS? IS THE BIBLE TRULY GOD'S WORD? OR IS IT A JUMBLE OF FANCIFUL MYTHS? *Atheist Universe* details why God is unnecessary to explain the universe's diversity, organization and beauty. Using simple, straightforward logic, this book rebuts every argument that claims to "prove" God's existence. A comprehensive primer for countering today's religious dogma, *Atheist Universe* addresses all the historical and scientific questions, including:

- What is atheism, and why is it so misunderstood?
- If God is a myth, then how did the universe appear?



•Without God, is there an objective “right” and “wrong”? •What is the meaning of life without God? •Is there evidence of Jesus’s miracles and resurrection? •Can atheists explain “near death” experiences and medical miracles? •Can science and the Bible realistically be reconciled? •What is the behind-the-scenes relationship between politics and religion? “An admirable work.” —Richard Dawkins “David’s work will be very useful for anyone combating harmful religious beliefs. Honest, frank, and right to the point!”—Albert Ellis, Ph.D., father of modern psychotherapy, author of *A Guide to Rational Living* [The Religion Virus](#)[not for sale on Google Play] Simon and Schuster

For thousands of years, the faithful have honed proselytizing strategies and

talked people into believing the truth of one holy book or another. Indeed, the faithful often view converting others as an obligation of their faith—and are trained from an early age to spread their unique brand of religion. The result is a world broken in large part by unquestioned faith. As an urgently needed counter to this tried-and-true tradition of religious evangelism, *A Manual for Creating Atheists* offers the first-ever guide not for talking people into faith—but for talking them out of it. Peter Boghossian draws on the tools he has developed and used for more than 20 years as a philosopher and educator to teach how to engage the faithful in conversations that will help them value reason and rationality, cast doubt on their religious beliefs, mistrust their

faith, abandon superstition and irrationality, and ultimately embrace reason.

**Big Gods** National Academies Press  
 Ninth Commandment: Thou Shalt Read the Koran  
 When Caliph Othman, the sole true creator of the Koran, finished setting down the very first compilation of the verses bequeathed by the Prophet, he found himself confronted by an incomprehensible book. In a fully logical way, Othman had classified the various verses he had found chronologically, from oldest to most recent. They were in the exact order in which they had been revealed to Mohammed over the course of his life. Nevertheless, in that order of reading, contradictions in the divine words appeared all too clearly. Allah had commanded one thing, while in later

chapters Allah had taken it all back and even said the opposite of what he had ordered at first. A distressing aberration. This first attempt of Othman's at compiling a Koran sounded like the private diary of a lunatic swinging from one contradiction to another, progressively falling into paranoia and schizophrenia. It showed the unstable character of Allah, or rather of Mohammed, who had imposed his will on those around him for more than twenty years in accordance with his mood of the moment. This was a groping, uncertain will. So, Othman decided to mix up all the texts he had in his possession. He put them in order of decreasing length, a trick that allowed him to tone down somewhat the incomprehensibility emerging from contradictory verses. The

Koran was born. To muddy the waters a little more around this literary poison, and to fool history, Othman also mingled episodes from Mohammed's life with others in verses historically distant from them. He mixed the Sage of Mecca together with the Murderer of Medina, going from cock to bull in just a few lines. Do not copy this asinine behavior! Read the Koran to grasp the full extent of Othman's trickery and that of his guru Mohammed. Doing that, you will grasp how men and women, normal human beings like you and like me, can turn into inhuman monsters, suicide bombers loving death more than life through their sick love for their Prophet, just as the S.S. did for Hitler. If Europeans had taken the trouble to read Mein Kampf, instead of listening to Nazi

propaganda claiming the Führer did not want war, Hitler would never have been able to exterminate the Jews by invading democratic nations. They would have mobilized to neutralize the German eagle before it took flight and put into action the murderous aims divulged in the book. Similarly, rather than listen to Islamic propaganda claiming that Mohammed was a peaceful Prophet of a religion of peace, if people even glimpsed into the Koran, they would have never allowed this warmongering sect to sneak into their democratic lives under the pretext of freedom of religion. Humankind had not wished to see the truth written in letters of blood in these two literary toxins revealing their murderous futures. In cowardly fashion, people allowed the Germans to sell their

souls to Satan. Now history was repeating itself and they were letting Moslems sell their souls to a heavenly Allah, but really to an earthly murderer called Mohammed, who was nothing else but the Devil. Of the two peoples that fell into the clutches of ideological obscurantism, one had woken with a start to find a gun in its hand as it stood on blood-soaked ground. The other was continuing to live a religious nightmare that may well lead all of us not to Paradise, but toward an awful doom. The end of humanity. Extract from the novel "The Sage of Mecca" by Thomas Anderson.

**Darwin's Angel** Pitchstone Publishing (US&CA)

This book uses evolutionary psychology as a lens to explain religious violence

and oppression. The author, a clinical psychologist, examines religious scriptures, rituals, and canon law, highlighting the many ways in which our evolutionary legacy has shaped the development of religion and continues to profoundly influence its expression. The book focuses on the image of God as the dominant male in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This traditional God concept is seen as a reflection of the "dominant ape" paradigm so evident in the hierarchical social structures of primates, with whom we have a strong genetic connection. The author describes the main features of male-dominated primate social hierarchies— specifically, the role of the alpha male as the protector of the group; his sexual dominance and use of violence and

oppression to attain food, females, and territory; in-group altruism vs. out-group hostility (us vs. them); and displays of dominance and submission to establish roles within the social hierarchy. The parallels between these features of primate society and human religious rituals and concepts make it clear that religion, especially its oppressive and violent tendencies, is rooted in the deep evolutionary past. This incisive analysis goes a long way toward explaining the historic and ongoing violence committed in the name of religion.

### **The Illusion of God's Presence**

Princeton University Press

The New York Times bestseller – a “crystal-clear, constantly engaging” (Jared Diamond) exploration of the role that religious belief plays in our lives and

our interactions For all the thousands of books that have been written about religion, few until this one have attempted to examine it scientifically: to ask why—and how—it has shaped so many lives so strongly. Is religion a product of blind evolutionary instinct or rational choice? Is it truly the best way to live a moral life? Ranging through biology, history, and psychology, Daniel C. Dennett charts religion’s evolution from “wild” folk belief to “domesticated” dogma. Not an antireligious screed but an unblinking look beneath the veil of orthodoxy, *Breaking the Spell* will be read and debated by believers and skeptics alike.

**Dawkins' GOD** Wipf and Stock Publishers

When Jesus said, “Suffer the children,”

faith healing is not what he had in mind

### **Why We Believe in God(s)**

Prometheus Books

From any non-Christian point of view, the gospel does not make sense. Grace doesn't make sense. Grace doesn't add up. Why would Jesus come to be one of us, to pay a debt He did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay? Why would He do that? Free? No strings? What was in it for Him? Since the church first began, Christians have had trouble accepting God's grace. We have substituted holiness, discipleship, order, regulation, and a long list of things to avoid in place of God's free gift. The result is a "Bad News Religion" that drains the joy and life out of believers. Bad News Religion is a convicting, liberating exploration of how we, in the

name of religion, have shifted the focus from the work of God to our ability to become worthy of salvation. The result is bondage and defeat. The key to success in the Christian life is not what we do, but who we know. Knowing God and knowing the fullness of His grace is a liberating experience. Most of us don't realize how we have robbed ourselves of experiencing the richness of God's grace.

### **Deus in Machina:Religion, Technology, and the Things in**

**Between** The Good Book Company  
Why do some beliefs become extinct while others adapt and flourish? James shows us how genetic evolution and cultural evolution, though operating at different rates, are one and the same. Recent science has gone a long way

toward explaining the origin of religious belief in evolutionary terms, but Craig James has cracked open the mystery of its tenacity. Religion does not exist for us, it exists for its own sake. Like a selfish gene or a parasite, the religion virus catches a free ride in the minds of our species, infecting our history and culture.

### **God and the Folly of Faith**

Bloomsbury Publishing USA

How belief in a loving and sovereign God helps us to make sense of and cope with the coronavirus outbreak. We are living through a unique, era-defining period. Many of our old certainties have gone, whatever our view of the world and whatever our beliefs. The coronavirus pandemic and its effects are perplexing and unsettling for all of us. How do we

begin to think it through and cope with it? In this short yet profound book, Oxford mathematics professor John Lennox examines the coronavirus in light of various belief systems and shows how the Christian worldview not only helps us to make sense of it, but also offers us a sure and certain hope to cling to.

Outbreak Penguin

A sweeping exploration of religion and the history of human violence—from the New York Times bestselling author of *The History of God* • “Elegant and powerful.... Both erudite and accurate, dazzling in its breadth of knowledge and historical detail.” —The Washington Post  
In these times of rising geopolitical chaos, the need for mutual understanding between cultures has never been more urgent. Religious

differences are seen as fuel for violence and warfare. In these pages, one of our greatest writers on religion, Karen Armstrong, amasses a sweeping history of humankind to explore the perceived connection between war and the world's great creeds—and to issue a passionate defense of the peaceful nature of faith. With unprecedented scope, Armstrong looks at the whole history of each tradition—not only Christianity and Islam, but also Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Judaism. Religions, in their earliest days, endowed every aspect of life with meaning, and warfare became bound up with observances of the sacred. Modernity has ushered in an epoch of spectacular violence, although, as Armstrong shows, little of it can be ascribed directly to

religion. Nevertheless, she shows us how and in what measure religions came to absorb modern belligerence—and what hope there might be for peace among believers of different faiths in our time. *The Dawkins Delusion?* CreateSpace "Science can't explain the complexity and order of life; God must have designed it to be this way." "God's existence is proven by scripture." "There's no evidence that God doesn't exist." "God has helped me so much. How could none of it be true?" "Atheism has killed more people than religion, so it must be wrong!" How many times have you heard arguments like these for why God exists? Why There Is No God: Simple Responses to 20 Common Arguments for the Existence of God provides simple, easy-to-understand



counterpoints to the most popular arguments made for the existence of God. Each chapter presents a concise explanation of the argument, followed by a response illustrating the problems and fallacies inherent in it. Whether you're an atheist, a believer or undecided, this book offers a solid foundation for building your own inquiry about the concept of God.

**Sex & God** InterVarsity Press

In this groundbreaking volume, J. Anderson Thomson, Jr., MD, with Clare Aukofer, offers a succinct yet comprehensive study of how and why the human mind generates religious belief. Dr. Thomson, a highly respected practicing psychiatrist with credentials in forensic psychiatry and evolutionary psychology, methodically investigates

the components and causes of religious belief in the same way any scientist would investigate the movement of astronomical bodies or the evolution of life over time—that is, as a purely natural phenomenon. Providing compelling evidence from psychology, the cognitive neurosciences, and related fields, he, with Ms. Aukofer, presents an easily accessible and exceptionally convincing case that god(s) were created by man—not vice versa. With this slim volume, Dr. Thomson establishes himself as a must-read thinker and leading voice on the primacy of reason and science over superstition and religion.

*Why There Is No God* Read Books Ltd  
Dr. Darrel Ray, psychologist and lifelong student of religion, discusses religious

infection from the inside out. How does guilt play into religious infection? Why is sexual control so important to so many religions? What causes the anxiety and neuroticism around death and dying? How does religion inject itself into so many areas of life, culture, and politics? The author explores this and much more in his book *The God Virus: How Religion Infects Our Lives and Culture*. This second-generation book takes the reader

several steps beyond previous offerings and into the realm of the personal and emotional mechanisms that affect anyone who lives in a culture steeped in religion. Examples are used that anyone can relate to and the author gives real-world guidance in how to deal with and respond to people who are religious in our families, and among our friends and coworkers.