

ESTEEMED SKEPTIC



I promise not to attack or be argumentative or call names. I really would like to interact with you concerning your thoughts about the non-existence of God.

Over the last several months it has been my privilege to converse via FB with a number of skeptics. For the most part, it has been enjoyable and enlightening. While I don't believe any minds changed, I at least, learned a lot.

I address you as "esteemed" because you have made the effort to come to conclusions. A lot of people, I think, just sort of drift through life, without bothering to think through these important issues. You have made the effort and I respect that.

My guess is you moved to skepticism out of disgust or disappointment with the Church and/or Christians you have known, or simply because you outgrew Christian teaching, leaving it behind, perhaps as you would a fairy tale. Scientific knowledge became your only sure way to establish the nature of truth and reality. If that is so, I can understand.

Full disclosure. For 30+ years I have actively served congregations as a Presbyterian minister. I am also a math teacher. I consider myself a devout follower of Jesus and yes, I do believe he is **THE** way to God. My heart's desire is that everyone (including you) would have a personal encounter with Jesus and discover his love and kindness.

There is no **PROOF** for the existence of God I am aware of. There is evidence though, especially in terms of design and beauty in the universe and as I will suggest later, **MEANING**.

Please correct me if I am wrong, but my understanding is that there is no "proof" for the existence of black holes. Their existence is **INFERRED** by certain measurable evidence, such as the curve of gravitation and light near those places.

In a similar way, the existence of God can be inferred from evidence (though granted, that evidence is not measurable).

A number of people I have spoken with have basically said, "If I can't see God with my eyes, or by scientific evidence, I am not going to believe in him."

I suppose it would be like trying to prove "love." How would you measure the evidence for love? Yet the presence of love seems undeniable for most people.

If you want to "see" God in order to believe, I would like to propose it is a good thing we CANNOT see God now. God is a spirit (non-bodily, self-existent, personal power). Until the coming of Christ, whenever God chose to make himself known visibly, do you know what people saw? Blazing fire coming out of mid-air.

Now, I don't know about you, but while blazing fire suddenly appearing would scare the daylight out of me, it would not draw me near in love.

Perhaps one of the most important statements in the whole Bible is when Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). God desires to be known as more than blazing fire – and came to us in a form we could appreciate and be drawn to.

That aside, I ask you to please work with me on the subject of "MEANING." The following thoughts are still forming in my own mind, but I believe they come very close to a crucial part of an argument for the existence of God. Feel free to blow up my arguments below. I want to improve my thinking on this and I certainly don't know it all.

If there is no God, we are simply calcium, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and phosphorus, which through a very long evolutionary process, have managed to gather together to walk and talk.

If that is all we are, then our sense of consciousness, of having an inner self, is simply the result of chemical reactions and the firing of electrons. This would include our REASONING as well.

If that is true, then I think the conversation I hope to have with you by FB would have no GENUINE meaning.

"Meaning" itself would be simply what we construct out of thin air. It would be what the majority vote of elemental bodies such as ourselves (most of whom came before) agreed upon. Thus, the meaning constructed by a paranoid schizophrenic would have as much validity as ours, except as a minority view.

I'm sure you believe there is meaning out there – otherwise, why bother with science? Or for me, why bother with theology and philosophy? Surely pronouncements from the Supreme Court DO have more meaning than a two-year old child making funny noises by strumming fingers on his lips.

Earlier I mentioned I am also a math teacher. If you take any isosceles right triangle, measure the length of one of the congruent legs, the hypotenuse will ALWAYS be that length, times the square root of two. Always, always, always. No matter how big or small the triangle.

That is NOT a construct of our own thinking. If a polar bear could measure lengths, he would find the same result – hypotenuse equals the leg multiplied by the square root of two.

That is why it is fair to say that human beings didn't invent math – we discovered it. Mathematical relationships are simply part of REALITY.

Please help me out with this line of thinking. Seriously.

Assuming you and I agree there is meaning out there, not just random electron-fired thoughts, then that would mean there is such a thing as TRUTH. If truth is that which corresponds to reality, then REALITY exists and MEANING has value other than what we assign.

When my son was driving home from high school one day, to his astonishment, his old Honda Accord ran out of gas. The gas gauge showed it still had a quarter tank of gas. Turns out, the

gas gauge was broken. He believed, based on good evidence, that gas was still there. The truth was different though. REALITY then came into play for him in an unpleasant way.

What am I trying to say?

You probably agree, as I do, that REALITY exists, whether people believe it to be so or not. Beliefs are neither here nor there, unless they correspond to reality. Our search for truth (whether through science, philosophy, psychology, or theology) presupposes that MEANING exists.

True meaning could not exist if it was simply a construct formed in our heads by individuals then voting collectively.

If meaning exists other than from our own construction, then SOMETHING OUTSIDE US AND PRIOR TO US must have previously established reality, truth, and its corresponding meaning, which we in turn search out and apply.

What are your thoughts on this? Do you think this is a reasonable argument for theism?