

Receiving the Gifts But Rejecting the Giver



by Rolaant McKenzie

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Richard Dawkins is a British evolutionary biologist and author well-known for being an outspoken professing atheist and for his criticism of Biblical creationism and intelligent design. In a January 2006 television documentary he wrote and presented, called *The Root of All Evil?*, he argued that humanity would be better off without religion or belief in God. His book, *The God Delusion*, published eight months later as a more detailed follow-up to the documentary, claimed that God almost certainly does not exist and that belief in Him qualifies as a mental delusion that is held in the face of what he believes to be strong contradictory scientific evidence.

In light of this, Dawkins' comments on March 31, 2024, in a London Broadcasting Company (LBC) radio interview with Rachel Johnson raised eyebrows when he said that he considered himself to be a "cultural Christian." He viewed Christianity as a "fundamentally decent religion." He enjoyed singing hymns, Christmas carols, and other traditions of the Christian faith. He took pleasure in the beauty of the cathedrals and parish churches in the United Kingdom and felt at home within the Christian ethos.

This did not mean Dawkins had abandoned his beliefs in atheism, Darwinian evolution, or his view that Biblical creationism was "pernicious nonsense," for he considered his

position as a cultural Christian to be distinct from being a believing Christian. But he was comfortable with what he perceived to be Christian culture, especially as a bulwark against Islam, which he considered malignant for society.

In his book, *River Out of Eden* (1995), Dawkins wrote:

“The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.”

For one who professes to believe in no God, no design or purpose to the universe, no evil or good, and that those who do are deluded, it is ironic that Dawkins says he values the benefits of Christian culture. The hymns, Christmas carols, cathedrals and parish churches, traditions, and laws derived from the Bible that he enjoys came from people who believed in God and were committed to their faith in Jesus Christ – the kinds of people he considers deluded.

In the interview, Johnson mentioned that authentic belief in Christianity and church attendance had plummeted, and at the same time, thousands of mosques had been constructed throughout Europe, with more being planned. Dawkins expressed happiness with the former but considered the latter to be a serious problem. But this illustrates one of the main inconsistencies of his worldview. How can he regard one religious culture as beneficial to society and another as harmful and malignant, all the while maintaining that there is essentially no good or evil in the universe?

Ideas and philosophies have consequences. Dawkins' promotion of his atheistic philosophy and ridicule of belief in God have contributed to the weakening of genuine Christian faith, the rise of godlessness, violence, and degeneracy, and the decline of Western society in particular. It has helped to make the

environment in which he lives and from which he derives benefits vulnerable to being overcome by the militant Islam and other totalitarian ideologies he fears. Dawkins is like a man who wishes to continue enjoying the protection and amenities of a house while at the same time weakening it by releasing termites into its underlying structure and foundation.

After the occasion when Jesus healed the sick and fed five thousand, He told the multitude following Him that they did so because He provided food for them. He told them not to labor for food that perishes but for food that grants eternal life provided by Him to all who believe in Him (John 6:26-69). Many who followed Jesus ceased to do so at this time because they were more interested in receiving physical sustenance from Him than believing in Him.

While most are not as ardent proponents of atheism as Dawkins is, many people who go to church because they enjoy the ceremonies, edifices, friends that attend, and feel-good messages they may hear live as though God did not exist. They like the benefits of a Christian culture while rejecting a personal relationship with Jesus, the One who made it possible.

While in a Roman prison awaiting execution, the apostle Paul wrote his last letter to a young pastor named Timothy:

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be **lovers of self**, lovers of money, **boastful, arrogant, revilers**, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power**. Avoid such men as these.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

While it can be easy to see how people like Dawkins may fit some of these characteristics of people living in the end times, those who hold to buffet-style Christian morality that prioritize cultural or social norms over biblical teachings resemble people who have a form of godliness but reject its power. Cultural Christianity deceives individuals into believing they are basically good people who do not need to repent of their sins and receive Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. It has no power to redeem anyone because it is not real.

A true Christian is one who receives the gifts of God's grace and mercy and embraces the Giver of those gifts through faith in Jesus Christ. Such a faith transforms lives and assures eternal life in God's kingdom. As more people in a society accept the Giver of Life through the proclamation of the gospel, they can become a blessed bulwark against religious and political tyranny and forestall the demise of a nation that forgets God (Psalm 9:17).

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