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A REASONABLE BASIS FOR RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

Opening Questions:

- Is it reasonable to believe that a creator of the human race exists?
- Why are there so many religious people on the planet?
- What is the most reasonable answer to account for my existence?
- Can atoms, molecules, acids, proteins, cells, tissues, organs and organ systems adequately account for my capabilities and what I experience as a human being?
- Does science have the tools to adequately explain certain aspects of human nature, the human experience and origin questions?

A book of this title is likely to attract readers of many different beliefs. It is reasonable to think that some who are hostile towards, or at least very skeptical of, Christian religion would be interested in reading this book. That is a good thing, and I hope they do –there is *much* to be upset about Christianity and Christians – especially their wrong beliefs about God and the hypocrisy that many practice. However, just because Christians have many incorrect beliefs and practices, it does not mean that they are wrong about everything. Stated another way, just because the Christians poison the well, it does not mean the well does not exist. Furthermore, just because many Christians are hypocrites, it does not mean that all are or that their hypocrisy nullifies certain truths about God. There are sincere, loving people who are Christians and to deny such indicates that you will benefit from reading this book and learn from it!

When dealing with people with whom you have fundamental disagreements, it is a common practice to reject almost everything they say or believe. Not only is this a harmful and destructive practice and one which prevents communication from taking place, but it is erroneous. This negative dynamic is typical among people who hold sincere political or religious beliefs. *For those who can receive it, to be a truly exceptional human being means you will listen to the other side and use reason in a compassionate and empathetic way to try and arrive at truth.* Imagine how much the communication would improve between the political "left" and "right" in the United States, for example, if they strove to practice that principle! We will look to see how genuinely tolerant we are of other people in a later chapter.

The beliefs that are the source of disagreement frequently prevent the people from getting to know each other even in a cursory way. For people to understand each other communication must take place, and when it does not, people remain ignorant of each other's essential views. When we are unaware of each other's views, we cannot build bridges to the other side—people will remain fearful and will tend to judge too quickly or to stereotype and reject. If left to ourselves we naturally withdraw and build walls and defenses due to our nature, as we will see.

The simple truth is that we as human beings, in general, *are insecure in our fundamental beliefs about reality;* or stated another way, *we are insecure in exploring our existential beliefs.* The word "existential" means "of existence," or it refers to attempts to understand our existence. This insecurity is an aspect of fear and is manifest when we get defensive when talking about something. We will take a closer look at why that is true later on.

Before we take a close look at why Christianity is a successful failure, we need first to establish some framework to make judgments about the world in general as well as about Christian beliefs or practices that exist within that world. In other words, we must have some high-level grasp on reality and be able to understand and accurately describe it to make sound judgments of beliefs or practices that interact or intersect with that reality. If I stay within a Christian world-view, I will not be able to accurately and effectively evaluate Christianity. We must come from a higher, more objective perspective to assess Christianity objectively.

This perspective or framework is essential especially for the people who are reading this book with the purpose of affirming that their judgments about Christianity or Christians are correct. To do that well we have to establish some facts regarding a world-view since Christianity is a worldview. In other words, we cannot make judgments well in a vacuum—with no points of reference or no larger context; nothing can be properly understood. We need facts to establish some framework to make sound judgments.

For example, before you could find your way to some destination, you need geographical facts to do so. So if you were trying to find your way to Chicago after someone left you in the middle of a forest in Central Canada — and you had no idea where you were on the earth and no directional tools to help you —that would be a challenging endeavor.

Or, as another example, before you could place a hospital well in a city, you would first need to know the existing layout of the city. If you did not understand the entire layout, you might well place the hospital where it would not be easily accessed or utilized optimally by the majority of the population. *So it is with determining exactly why and how Christianity and Christians are a successful failure.* We must build a framework to account for reality; we must have some basic understanding of the larger world of which Christianity and its adherents are a part.

As noted above and in general, when someone does not like something (has a preexisting bias), then it is common to make the mistake of "throwing the

baby out with the bathwater," also known as the Hasty Generalization fallacy. That fallacy is given illustration by the expression about the baby and bathwater. If you have ever washed a dirty baby whom you love, the saying will make perfect sense—that you don't throw the valuable thing out (the baby) with that which is worthless (the dirty bathwater). Instead, we should only throw out that which is worthless. In the case of concepts or beliefs and using reason to understand those concepts or ideas, we should not dismiss or ignore that which is true (the baby) because we don't like the wrong or incorrect things surrounding it or associated with it (the dirty bathwater).

For example, a person might observe Christians behaving hypocritically (the bathwater) and as a result rejects, dismisses or will not consider the possibility that Joshua of Nazareth is accurately represented in the four gospel books (the baby). That is a rejection based on fallacious reasoning with a wrong conclusion. The only right conclusion from looking at Christianity's dirty bathwater is to rightly judge that the bathwater is dirty and unworthy of partaking in. However, if you are a truly exceptional person, then perhaps helping those who hold to the beliefs and practices of the dirty bathwater to see the error of their ways would be the right and noble thing to do even if nothing comes of it?

So let us start in on this adventure and spend a bit of time building this framework to gain the broader perspective that best represents reality, and thus be in an excellent position to judge Christianity as a successful failure.

This chapter will be about finding the answer to the questions – What is religion and is it reasonable for people to have religious beliefs and practices?

Simple, Undeniable Existential Truths: The Basics of Reality

Certain facts about reality are undeniable and human existence is quite simple. We exist and interact with other people and things of this planet. We have basic biological needs that we must meet for our bodies to remain alive—food, clothing, and shelter. We have a compelling social need to be accepted, affirmed and involved with others. We have a strong urge to express our sexuality. We have a spiritual need to have a clear conscience and to be forgiven of our wrongs and free from guilt.

Furthermore, we are self-aware beings with the ability to evaluate our surroundings, interactions, and experiences with a rational mind. We can know truth and rightness, and we do in fact apply those judgments in living out our daily experiences. For example, when we determine someone is lying to us, we have made a judgment about what is true versus what is false. Or, if someone calls us an idiot, we decide as to whether that was a right or wrong thing to say. When we make a mathematical calculation, we determine whether or not we believe the calculation creates an accurate result. If we see a man in a park harming a young child, we make a judgment and hopefully intervene.

More facts that are undeniable include that we human beings will physically die. That is to say; our bodies will fail and cease to function. Equally undeniable is that we are more than atoms, molecules, acids, proteins, cells, organs, organ systems and a bit of biochemical energy. Just as it is unreasonable and irrational to believe that a computer's hardware created or accounts for a computer's software and its application's abilities, in the same way, it is silly to say that our bodies somehow account for our personality, soul or spirit.

It is irrational to believe that our personality; our ability to reason; our ability to have complex abstract thoughts; our knowing right from wrong; our ability to see ourselves and ponder existential questions; and our ability to love and to forgive; are all caused by merely physical things.

To believe that all things are merely physical is no different than a sibling exclaiming to his mother as they entered the theatre to watch his sister's high school play, "look, mom, the bricks of the building and wood of the stage created and communicated the content of the play we are watching!"

This book will not make a protracted defense of these simple realities for they are self-evident, but the reader is free to try and use reason and logic to prove them wrong. For those who disagree with my assertions above, I ask you at least allow for the possibility that they are correct and thus move forward.

So, where did we come from and what happens to us when our bodies die? These are entirely reasonable questions. In fact, for reasoning, self-aware, sentient being and a being that can love – they are *the* questions of life! And yet how many people seriously ponder those questions? I have observed that very few are willing to ponder those questions seriously. Some of the reasons people don't consider those questions are as follows.

Some are afraid to ponder the questions. They like existing – they love their life in this world and fear causes them to stay away from the questions. They would much prefer to pretend death will not happen to them, or if it does, it is a long way off.

Some have believed the falsehood that they are just atoms and molecules and so they think their lives are merely physical existence, and when their bodies die, they cease to exist. As such, fear would also keep many of them away from pondering that end. I assert that this is untenable to regularly contemplate the end of our existence for both a reasoning being as well as a being who knows real love.

A physicalist (a person who believes all aspects of human life can be accounted for by matter or physical things) must deny certain capacities, abilities, and traits of both our persons and our experiences to hold to that view. For example, the concept of forgiveness between two people is a spiritual or metaphysical concept that cannot rationally be reduced to a chemical cause; and just because it is not a chemical does not mean it is not real. That claim would commit the fallacy of begging the question. Having a physicalist worldview does not prove that physicalism is a correct understanding of reality.

In fact and as we shall see, physicalism is severely lacking as a worldview or existential belief.

For many, perhaps for the majority, religion comes in to provide what they believe are reliable answers to the question, "what happens to me when my body dies?" Many religious leaders have been taught the answers from their teachers, and they were taught by their teachers, etc. over the generations. So what is this thing called "religion"? Before we can have a rational and meaningful discussion about something, we need to define it correctly, or else we are wasting our time. We will define many terms in this book.

The popular definition of "religion" is the things people believe and the behavior they engage in regarding God; gods; things spiritual or metaphysical; after death existence; or morality. This understanding of religion is the commonly held definition that the people of the world believe. This view or definition of religion has millions of voices (the religious leaders) informing the billions who inquire about God and his role in human life. There are many different religions and spiritual beliefs many of which contradict each other and lead to conflict.

The definition that Jesus (or Joshua) of Nazareth gives to "religion" is *the things people believe and do concerning God, spiritual or metaphysical things, human life, and death - that have no basis in my teachings or which nullify or work against my teachings.* [6] This view or definition of religion has one voice informing those who inquire about God and His role in human life.

This distinction is critical – between the conventional definition of religion and Joshua of Nazareth's definition of religion.

The term "religious" means *people who believe some God, gods or a spiritual reality exists and who have practices around those God or spiritual beliefs which beliefs or practices have no reasonable basis in Joshua of Nazareth's teachings.* Please read that again and understand the distinction between that definition and the term used by agnostics and atheists against people who believe God exists.

The prior definitions do not mean that all religious people are wrong about all things God; nor does it mean that all of their practices are meaningless or harmful. As I said, it merely means *they have no basis in Joshua of Nazareth's teachings.* Most people who hold God beliefs which cancel out or nullify Joshua's teachings are "religious" people, but that does not mean that all religious people have beliefs or practices which cancel out or invalidate Joshua's instructions. For example, many non-Christian religious people have views that happen to align with some of Joshua's ethical teachings.

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[6] See Mark 7. The term "religion" is synonymous with the term "tradition" in that passage. Here is the passage, "And Jesus said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written (in the Hebrew scripture), "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines (truths from God) the precepts of men.' Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the **tradition (religion) of men**." Jesus was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God to keep your **tradition (religion)**."

It is imperative that the reader understand that I am using *the historical person of Joshua of Nazareth as he reveals himself through his own words in the four gospel books as my Standard to make points, distinctions and judgments about religion, Christianity, and God.* This definition is proved correct by comparing what a religious person believes, says or does against the teachings of Joshua of Nazareth. It is just as important to consider what Joshua of Nazareth *did not say* as it is to consider what he did say as we shall see.

Many atheists, non-theists and others hostile to the belief that God exists often use the term "religious" to describe *any* person who believes a God or gods exist. Their definition of "religious" is significantly different to the way I am defining it in this book. Do you see the distinction? Both views – that of the followers of Joshua of Nazareth, and that of non-theists and others of their ilk – have in common that religious people are in error about something. Joshua says that people who hold beliefs and practices *which hide, contradict, substitute for, cancel out or nullify HIS teachings* are in great error.

Non-theists and those who hold similar beliefs say that any person who believes a God or god's exist and expresses or communicates that idea in some way is religious and in error about all their God beliefs. That belief is not a reasonable or valid belief or judgment, or at least it cannot be proven to be true.

My definition or meaning of the term "religious" is defensible using the standard of Joshua of Nazareth and his teachings in the four gospel books. Non-theists have no standard to defend their definition of "religious" although most would say "science." Science cannot prove that God does not exist and in fact, the physical evidence points to a creator/designer. Furthermore, science is lost regarding its ability to address some of the most important concepts that we deal with as human beings like love, forgiveness, justice, etc. (Which real and vital ideas are metaphysical by the way!)

The simple truth is that all people have some beliefs about the reality they experience each day; what is important what is not; what is worth pursuing and what is not; what is valuable and what is not; why am I getting out of bed today. People reasonably wonder about the creation of the earth and its life. If people reject the irrational view that all the fantastic, diverse, genetic code-based, complex organic machines we call organisms on the planet had no designer (see the Intelligent Design books for a robust defense of this simple reality), then they reasonably wonder about the designer/creator.

People have beliefs about their nature and human nature in general. If people reject the irrational view that mere physical particles (atoms, molecules, acids, proteins, cells, tissues, organs and the organ systems of our body) can account for all aspects of our existence including:

- Our ability to reason;
- Our ability to know right from wrong;
- Our sentience (to have emotions caused by perceptions);

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- Our love ("love" as defined by Joshua of Nazareth is selfless behavior motivated by compassion, the opposite principle to evolution's supposed mechanism of survival of the fittest).

…then they reasonably wonder what their soul is as well as their mind or spirit. Furthermore, it is entirely reasonable that they will wonder what will happen to those metaphysical components – what will happen to *them* — when their body dies.

If non-theists were honest with themselves and others when asked what happens to them when they die, they would say something to this effect:

- "I cease to exist—all my experiences and memories and important relationships I had in life are gone, lost to an empty void of nothingness;
- No love will endure;
- No cherished events or memories or people will endure;
- Every valuable and meaningful thing I experienced in life will be gone, wiped out, erased;
- Everyone I loved will be lost in an empty black void of nothingness".

If we, as human beings, are doing a half-way decent job at questioning those fundamental things about human existence—about our existence—about *my* existence; then we are doing well. If we are not exploring the most important questions of life, then we are not living a full life but rather a half-life, a delusional life. If we redefine or ignore love's true nature and meaning, then we are living a half-life. However, when we turn to religion for those answers and deny reason when doing so, we do not do well.

Religion is essential to billions of people. It is fair to say that we human being tend to be religious or spiritual beings. In fact, over ninety percent of the human beings on the planet if asked, "how or why do you exist" would have some answer that is "religious" or "spiritual" in nature. While that does not prove anything regarding God claims, it does show that the human mind has a reasonable default view most likely based on simple observations and deductions like complicated things require a designer; or beings which have spiritual or metaphysical components must have a sufficient cause of those components.

The Reasonableness of the Existence of God

It is only reasonable for people to be religious or spiritual since believing that we are merely a physical entity is not rational. Nor is it reasonable to think that non-organic machines like an automobile just happened through natural forces. We know, based on the mind we have, that a designer *must* exist to account for even merely the physical, complex organic machines that are our bodies.

I would say that to believe that all things evolved from nothing or hydrogen gas or a giant explosion is irrational, and yet that is the basic premise of naturalistic evolutionary doctrine.

The fact is that well over ninety percent of the human's on the earth believe a creator or creators exist and are reasonable for doing so. For example, it is unreasonable to think that a computer created itself and further that the hardware somehow created the software or the software was integrated into the hardware by natural forces. And yet this is the underlying belief of those people who deny the requirement of a designer to account for complex machines with inter-dependent subsystems or who deny the spiritual or metaphysical realities of human nature.

- Our abilities of:
- Self-awareness;
- Sentience (the ability to experience emotions based on and connected to thoughts, perceptions, and experiences);
- Internally knowing what is right from wrong;
- Being able to reason abstractly with no physical things to support that reasoning.

All these abilities of human beings cannot reasonably be accounted for by mere physical matter. *Atoms, molecules, acids, proteins, cells, tissues, organs, organ systems and a bit of biochemical energy cannot adequately account for our human abilities or our experiences.* To believe that mere physical objects can somehow account for our abilities and experiences is to think that the bricks, mortar, wood, metal, and plastic of the theatre can account for the concepts conveyed in the Shakespeare play in that theatre. Or, it is similar to believing that a computer's hardware created or can account for the computer's software.

The Bicycle Illustration

As I have stated, our physical aspect alone clearly requires a designer. That our bodies need a designer is self-evident since things (inorganic or organic) with relatively complex inter-related systems or subsystems that work together to make the whole work, in no way could have come together by chance but instead require a designer. *That is to say that the probability is zero that those interdependent sub-systems – or the forces that built them - "knew" how to integrate with each other to accomplish the purpose of the machine.* Furthermore, the probability is zero that those interdependent sub-systems just integrated themselves through random chance. Let's explore and explain this important concept using a relatively simple inorganic machine - a bicycle - as an example.

A bicycle has several component systems. The frame needs to be designed to be able to bear the load of the rider and the forces they will experience using the whole machine. The frame is made up of various pieces of material joined in such a way as to both bear the load of the rider as well as connect/integrate the other component systems to the machine and it also includes a seat for the passenger to rest their body on while on the machine. The device needs a steering system to enable the rider to direct the bike. The steering system is made up of several tubes that need to rotate while staying firmly attached to the

frame as well as handlebars the rider can use to direct the front wheel. The machine needs a braking system to allow the rider to stop the bike safely. The braking system is made up of cables, springs, clamps, and pads, all working together to enable the rider to apply different amounts of friction against the wheels to slow the rotation of the wheels.

The machine needs a way to move across the ground so that the rider can travel faster than just walking or running. The motion system is made up of wheel rims, rubber tires, spokes, axles and bearing to hold the wheels to the frame while still enabling the wheels to rotate freely. The machine will need an engine – in this case, the rider's muscles – and a way to transfer the power the engine produces to the means the machine will use to move forward – a drive system. This system is comprised of pedals which take the power of the engine and transfer it to round gears which connect to a chain which transfers the engine's force to the rear wheel to spin the wheel.

Can you see that a relatively simple machine like a bicycle is made up of several subsystems and that the whole machine would not work without each of the subsystems integrating into the other subsystems? Please remember that in the case of the bicycle, even the subcomponents – like the brake system or the propulsion or drive system – have multiple parts that also reasonably require a designer.

Here are some fundamental questions that reveal that the simple machine – the bicycle – requires a designer. How would the drive system come together and know how to orient itself on the frame? How would the braking system create itself and know how to orient itself to the propulsion system and the frame? How would the steering system create itself and know where and how to attach to the load-bearing system? Hundreds of other such questions could be asked, and each one deserves a reasonable answer.

Is it not unreasonable to believe that a simple machine like a bicycle could somehow arise and exist without a mind designing it? The mathematical probability is virtually zero. That is to say, that even with billions of years of trial and error, a bicycle forming itself without a mind designing it is as likely as the following. Imagine having a can at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, and you flying over the ocean in a plane not knowing where the can is, and having to drop a ball into the can of the same diameter, tens of thousands of times in a row! That probability picture is similar to what we are talking about regarding complex machines with inter-related subsystems forming themselves.

The idea that natural forces over time could somehow reasonably account for the existence of even a simple machine, like a bicycle, is *untenable or irrational*. The problem some people have with this line of reasoning is organic versus the inorganic aspects of the argument. In other words, they claim there is some logical error or gulf over trying to compare the organic and the inorganic. My question is why? Why are cellular structures that provide identical functionality to metal or plastic molecular structures not legitimately comparable?

That fact is that organic machines – particularly the bodies of creatures like mammals, on this planet – exist, and those machines/bodies are far more

complicated than the most complex machine that man has so far been able to create.

So, the question is, how could even a simple machine like a bicycle exist without a mind designing both the subsystems as well as how those subsystems have to integrate or connect for the whole machine to exist and accomplish its purpose? Given a few billion years and the forces of nature, will even a simple device with just a few inter-dependent subsystems arise without a designer directing its creation?

The laws of thermodynamics are well established physical laws that no reasonable scientist questions. The second law of thermodynamics states that the total entropy (disorganization) of an isolated system can only increase over time. Here is a fuller definition of entropy: "the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity; a process of degradation or running down or a *trend to disorder*." [7]

In other, simpler words, the second law of thermodynamics states that physical matter will become *less organized or ordered* over time…particles will disperse or degrade into their simplest form. That dear reader is the exact opposite of what naturalistic evolutionists claim—evolutions claim that matter naturally become more complex and ordered over time.

The reasonable view is that the natural forces of nature will not produce biomechanical machines of even simple complexity. It requires the creative conceptualization of a reasoning mind to order the components of even a simple machine. And it needs specifically directed and controlled energy and physical manipulation/shaping to bring the machine into existence.

If it is not reasonable for a simple machine to form itself, how much more unreasonable for a complicated machine with many complex interrelated and inter-dependent sub-systems or components to design and create itself! For more complicated inorganic machines consider some manufacturing plants or an automobile or space shuttle.

Do not be misled by the lottery fallacy. That is the argument that improbable things happen regularly, like someone winning the lottery. The lottery is a chance-based game of guessing the same number – a number of a fixed length - drawn randomly. As more and more people play the lottery, the probability that *someone* will win is quite high; thus someone regularly wins the lottery. In other words, the probability is quite high or very likely that someone will win the lottery as more and more people guess the six digit number.

However, the argument that a bicycle and its related sub-systems would form over time by natural forces is like saying that *a particular person* will win the lottery, and in fact is has a *much lower* probability than a bicycle just happening through natural forces. In other words, it is like saying that the person "Jack Goodluck" will win the next lottery. So, for example, let us say a lottery is held in a six-state area in the US. Let us also assume that the six-state area has

[7] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com, April 2018

twenty-five million people in it. What would be the probability that the individual Jack Goodluck who lives in Smalltown in one of those six states will pick the winning number of that lottery? It is a similar probability that the bicycle's steering system will randomly happen by itself. [8]

The simple truth is that unlikely things do NOT happen regularly! An intelligence design proponent, Dr. Hugh Ross, calculated the probability of life occurring on the earth at one in less than ten to the two-hundred and eighty-second power, or less than 1 in 10^{282} [9]. For comparison's sake, a widely accepted estimate of the number of atoms in the known universe is approximately 10^{80}. Therefore, the probability of life occurring purely naturally and randomly on the earth is for all practical purposes, zero.

To argue that since life exists, it proves that the probability arguments like Mr. Ross are wrong is *far less reasonable* than to theorize that a designer must exist to account for those machines. In other words, throwing away the science of probability theory because you don't like where it takes you is far less reasonable than theorizing that a highly advanced Being created life on this planet.

Now take the next step. Consider biological or organic machines or organisms that can self-replicate self-heal or have automated systems that defend against harmful agents. Can you imagine a bicycle that could fix itself without a mind intervening? Or a car that could diagnosis its problems and have a system that could deliver the repair! Humankind is very creative and will probably be able to build machines like this in the future, but only because *we have a mind to conceptualize and design such machines* and because we have organic machines from which to learn! Stated another way, engineers regularly learn from the created world and get many of their ideas by reverse engineering the Creator's designs!

It is a fact that the complexity of the human body, for example, far exceeds the most advanced computers and machines man has made or will be able to make in the foreseeable future even with all the accumulated knowledge, technology, and design skills. And if humans can eventually duplicate those functions, it will only happen by using the metaphysical mind (operating system and application) the creator has given us; and through reverse engineering the incredibly complex organic machines that are the biological creatures on the earth.

The human body alone - not even considering the brain - is an engineering and design marvel that the smartest human engineers and designers cannot even approach regarding complexity and function. Think of all the inter-related and inter-dependent system the human body needs to function correctly.

- The skeleton to bear the load;

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[8] For a good explanation of the Lottery Fallacy, see http://rightreason.org/2010/the-lottery-fallacy-fallacy/

[9] See Hugh Ross's book, "Improbable Planet: How Earth Became Humanity's Home."

- The joints to allow for incredible flexibility of the movement of the components;
- The respiratory system which provides the energy of oxygen to the cells that require it;
- The digestive system to break down energy bearing materials to the right level for processing;
- The nervous system which transmits commands of the mind to operate our voluntary, and automatically sends self-sustaining commands to the involuntary muscles;
- The ability to see, and taste and smell and hear;
- The reproductive system;
- The dermatological system;
- The genetic code system that programs and self-directs the formation of the machine;
- The immune system that identifies and eliminates harmful agents.

Indeed, the human body makes even a space shuttle look primitive in comparison. And artificial barriers of organic versus inorganic does not in any way nullify the truth of that statement.

You need to ask yourself this simple question, dear reader. If it is unreasonable for your car or bicycle or phone or computer to exist without someone designing it, why is it reasonable for your body to exist without someone designing it?

If a more straightforward machine with inter-dependent subsystems like a car requires a designer, then why not acknowledge the self-evident truth that a more complicated device with greater functionality or more complex systems would need an even greater or smarter designer? This might be the first time you are considering the possibility that you have a designer and this ought to make you curious! (If you are a person that has experienced religion and you are saying, "yeah, I know God exists," please consider the possibility that the "god" religion has taught you about is not the Creator.)

Furthermore, it is unreasonable to believe that complex physical systems or machines comprised of interdependent sub-systems can exist without a designer. Again, it is absurd to think that a car or a computer would form itself from the raw materials if given enough time. You are free to read the many, many words of those scientific philosophers who would try and convince you otherwise. As you will see, their many words and the complexity associated with those many words; and the concepts those words form and advocate, have as their purpose trying to hide an elementary and self-evident truth. We will look at the practice of using complexity to hide things in a later chapter.

Comparing the most advanced human-designed machine – like the space shuttle – to the organic machine which is the human body – is to embarrass the designers of the space shuttle as being ignorant, rudimentary or puerile engineers. The human body with its genetic code/language that controls the

characteristics of our bodies as well as our reproduction is fantastic. The human body with it interdependent systems and with functions like self-healing and the automatic immune system - is so far more advanced than the space shuttle *that it is ferociously irrational to claim that there is no designer behind the organic "machines" of the earth.*

It is true that claiming the Christian god is that designer does not logically follow as the non-theists rightly point out. The Designer's existence is evident, but the identity of that Designer must be established using good inductive and deductive reasoning, observation and perhaps the Designer communicating to humanity.

Therefore, human beings are inherently "religious" or "spiritual" because we find ourselves having the abilities listed above. We find ourselves using those abilities to look at flutterbys and sunsets or people we value and appreciating their beauty and marveling at the Creation. We can know we have wronged someone and we can feel the guilt. We are willing to die for someone out of our love for them. We know that even though we cannot sense (or physically account for) the spiritual abilities that we have, *that they are real and they do exist. We know that mere physical things* – atoms, molecules, acids, proteins, cells, tissue, organs, organ systems, i.e., building blocks - *cannot account for those abilities. Nor can atoms account for our experiences, or the design of the things created* - just like a computer's hardware cannot account for its software (nor can the hardware create itself!).

Non-theists will counter, "but in time we will understand that those abilities have a physical cause." That counter argument is weak at best. Time and physical investigation are going to enable us to understand that a computer's hardware did write/account for the software? Time and physical investigation are going to find the physical nature of numbers? Time and physical investigation are going to reveal the physical nature of reason and logic? Time and physical investigation are going to reveal the physical cause behind a person willingly giving their life away for another person? Time and physical investigation are going to prove that the concept of forgiveness is physical? The truth is time will not do that, for metaphysical or spiritual reality exists and is the best and only reasonable explanation for these things. Please do not choose the path of the irrational or maintain irrational "hopes" to avoid the simple truth that is right in front of you.

Another "defense" the non-theists will raise is "oh, those are old arguments that the author is making have been debunked for years…" or "Expert so-and-so has written a great book proving this fellow's arguments are wrong…" or something to that effect. They will then point you to some large, complicated book as their "defense" instead of providing a clear, brief explanation as to why the arguments I offer are not valid. They generally do this because they cannot reasonably counter the self-evident truth that complex machines (organic or inorganic) with inter-dependent subsystems require a designer.

Stated another way, the person arguing against the evident truths stated here cannot boil down the immense complexities that their favorite author offers in

their book(s) because they do not understand them and for good reason! They cannot follow them because there are contradictions contained in all the convoluted arguments they make. It is no different than a fellow from one religious sect trying to "convert" another fellow into his sect by handing him a six hundred page book on theology from his esteemed professor at the seminary. (We will deal with using complexity in the "Hiding in Complexity" chapter.)

Again, those who point to "experts" so-called to refute the simple truths put forth here do this because facts cannot be reasonably denied and since they are unwilling to submit to the truth in this domain, they believe they need to come up with some defense. There is no reasonable refutation of the self-evident fact that complicated machines with inter-dependent subsystems – whether human-made inorganic or God-made organic – *require* a designer.

And as we shall see, mere physical things cannot in any reasonable way account for the most critical concept and aspect of life that we human beings experience and grapple with – true love.

One other quite silly response that people will provide to the "who created you" question is, "my mom and dad." I would respond to that person, "Did your parents" design and create you? I'd like to talk with them about their design planning and how the accomplished sentience, abstract reasoning, and a moral knowing—as well as the easier stuff like how they designed your brain to function. To say your parents "created you" is like saying the guy who drives the iron delivery truck to the auto plant created the plant's output, an automobile. The truth is that your parents just brought the raw materials together and then the Designer's "magic" happened to create you!'

So, having put forth a major premise of this book:
- That the billions of human beings that cover the earth are reasonably religious or spiritual;
- That humans reasonably have existential God beliefs to account for their existence;

Let us continue to build the framework and take a brief look at how humanity is doing and if religion is helping humankind be better as time moves forward. Or, stated another way, let us take a brief look at some of the facts and realities about human existence that meaningfully add to the broader framework that we are building and the worldview we are addressing so that we may make sound judgments as to whether Christianity is a successful failure.

Chapter Summary:
- We exist, and we have a cause for our existence – observation, reason, and logic leave no other option;
- Given the complexity of merely our physical presence, the only reasonable conclusion is that a designer exists—a designer capable of understanding and putting together all the complex systems of the human body.

Complex bio-organic machines with interdependent subsystems don't just exist by random natural forces;

- We have metaphysical or spiritual aspects to our person or nature and to deny that is irrational and to demonstrate a physicalist bias;
- It is reasonable for people to have beliefs about God or to believe that a creator must exist.