



**‘No’ to Theism Means ‘No’ to Atheism and  
‘Yes’ to Humanism**  
a review of

# **Everybody is Wrong About God**

By James Lindsay (2015)

Lindsay has given us a well-reasoned, if a bit wordy, book about how to deal with the word **God**. The first meaning of **God** expresses the supernatural being of theism, today regarded as mythology by much of the educated public. The second meaning is more functional - symbolizing the moral code of believers, the ultimate purpose and meaning of their lives, the glue that holds their communities together, their experience of transcendence, and more.

Lindsay expresses the second meaning by saying that it fulfills the “psycho-social needs” of believers. He says, we should accept these needs as valid and divorce them from the mythological baggage of the first meaning. This could be done by transforming their religion into a form of Humanism, leaving behind all the inconsistencies and injustices of dogmatic belief. In other words, stop arguing about theology and focus on raising doubts about dogma, meeting the practical needs of people, and the secularization of society (get churches out of politics, etc.).

The result would be “post-theistic” religion, not atheism, meaning that theism would become irrelevant – an archaic feature of human history. But all this will require far more education in science and critical thinking skills, plus a socio-economic system that is more effective at meeting those psycho-social needs than traditional religion. That’s where

the Nordic countries excel – by sharply reducing life fears and anxieties, hence the need to appeal to “God” for guidance, solace, or salvation.

My one critique is that Lindsay uses the word “faith” to mean belief in anything that lacks solid evidence. Thus he wants to eliminate faith and God talk. The problem is that today the word “faith” may also apply to following moral codes or guideposts which we think will help us lead worthy lives and create better societies, even though the principles in question may be unverifiable, backed by only tenuous evidence.

That is, future generations might judge differently because moral science, as Lindsay admits, is complex and poorly developed today. In particular, “faith communities” may encompass a broad spectrum, including non-theistic churches like Unitarians and others where the God talk is purely metaphorical.

In the final analysis Lindsay advises us to proceed with caution – with “authenticity and honesty, with a mind to do good to the best of our abilities [with humility]. The last thing we are after is launching another morally charged ideology” (p 177). This presages his later attack on Critical Race Theory, the latest ideology proclaimed with religious fervor, termed “Woke Racism” by John McWhorter.