

The God of the Gaps

by Fred Peatross

God has always been the thesis mankind used when the gaps could not be explained. He is the God of the gap. But there's a problem. As we've gotten smarter and smarter, there are fewer and fewer gaps that need explained.

We use to ask, "What makes the crops grow?" But with the advances of modern science we now know what makes them grow. We live as if we believe God has less to do. He has become western society's genie in the bottle. If we want Him we'll rub the bottle and request His presence. Otherwise we manage just fine. He has become an irrelevancy in western society. But let me go a step further and say that God is dead; not by virtue of atheistic influence but by virtue of our humanistic life style. He is no longer necessary.

Think about the Israelite wanderings. Here was a group that was totally dependent upon God. Manna had a shelf life of twenty-four hours and if God oversleeps just one morning; the Israelites don't eat. And when you're dependent for water in the desert, it helps to have a God who can do rock tricks. The Israelites were, totally and absolutely, dependent upon Him, yet when they moved into the Promise Land everything changed. When they needed water, they went to the well. When they were hungry they didn't look for the manna from heaven; they simply harvested their crops. It not surprising that God told them, "Be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." (Deut 6:12)

Today we live far from the desert. It's more the nature of a third millennial Promise Land. The majority of us navigate our day just fine without God. When we're hungry we go to our Kenmore refrigerator. When we're thirsty we turn on the faucet. If we get sick we call the doctor. Once a month we have ChemLawn cut our weeds and manicure our lawn. Practically speaking, we don't need God.

If we found the body of God and checked the dental records and discovered that God had actually died I am convinced that many of us would still attend church. We're use to the ritual and we like the people enough to continue the tradition.

The problem in our assemblies today is not apathy, but a practical atheism that removes God as the center and replaces Him with me. We deal with our world in worldly ways. No longer are we directly dependent on God. Our threat in this new era is not academic atheism but practical atheism and it has produced a generation of spiritual slouchers.

Consider that ninety percent of Americans say they believe in God. There are few pure atheists. If you're looking for an atheist in America today you'll have to spend time looking on the college campus. The majority of Americans believe and you'll find many of them in the pew this Sunday, yet their convictions have little to do with the way they live. Practical atheism is the logical consequence of a rational system that lives life without the need to appeal to God. At the heart is a materialistic view of history and the complete secularization of life.

Wake us up Lord; wake us up!

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