

The Mystery of Persons and Belief in God

C. Stephen Evans

C. Stephen Evans earned his doctorate in philosophy at Yale University and continued his studies on Kierkegaard as a Marshall Fellow in Denmark. A recipient of grants from the Danforth Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, he has taught at Wheaton College (1974-84) and is currently a professor of philosophy and Curator of Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. He is the author of many articles in philosophical and psychological journals such as *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, and *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, and has written several books, including *Subjectivity and Religious Belief* and *Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript."*

Portions of this were article taken from *The Quest for Faith* by C. Stephen Evans. (c)1986 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of the U.S.A. and used by permission of Inter Varsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downer's Grove, IL 60515.

Are there good reasons for belief in God? Many philosophers, myself included, agree with Alvin Plantinga that religious belief can be *properly basic*, that is, reasonable even when it is not based on any reasons that could be employed in an *argument*. Nevertheless, this does not imply that good reasons for believing in God cannot be given. What kind of evidence should we expect to find, if God is real, and if He has provided evidence of His reality?

I believe that two characteristics would be found in any such evidence. First, I would expect the evidence to be widely available. If God exists, and it is important for us humans to know that, then we would not expect the evidence for His reality to be available only to a small esoteric group. Nor would we expect the evidence to be such that a Ph.D. in philosophy would be required to grasp it.

Secondly, I would expect the evidence to be the kind of evidence which could be doubted or explained away by someone who did not want to believe in God. Someone who is forced to be aware of God's reality might very well want to serve and obey God for less than noble motives, since God is supposed to be very powerful and very knowledgeable. Traditionally Christians have taught that God wants people to serve Him out of love, not fear or greed. So it would not be surprising that the evidence for God, though widely available, is also relatively easy to dismiss, write-off, or explain away if a person wishes to do this.

It is this last factor which doubtless is the reason why religious people put so much emphasis on faith as the precondition for religious knowledge. In the case of religion, the personal condition of the knower has a great impact on the knowledge to be gained. The person who wants to know can find evidence; the person who wants to be ignorant of God can be successful as well.

Philosophical Proofs

Most philosophical discussions of religion revolve around the notion of "proof." Many philosophers have put forward arguments as proofs of God's existence, and many others have offered refutations of these proofs. Most of these philosophical discussions of the reasonableness of belief in God focus on one single argument. Critics have often taken advantage of this fact and employed a divide-and-conquer strategy. Thus a writer will first refute the "argument from design," then the "moral argument," and so on, concluding that, because none of the arguments is a successful proof, belief in God is unreasonable.

This procedure is objectionable in at least two ways. First, since the arguments are considered in isolation, there is no attention given to the possibility that the arguments might have great force if taken collectively. One bit of evidence against a criminal may not be enough to convict him. The same may be said of a second or third bit, or any number of bits, when taken in isolation. If each bit does have some force, however, then all of the bits taken together may be more than enough to convict the accused and send him off to prison.

The second objection to the typical philosophical critique of proofs of God's existence is that the standard of proof involved is usually fantastically high. What constitutes a "proof" anyway? This question is none too easy to answer. Must an argument be universally accepted to be a proof? Accepted by all sane people who consider it? Frequently something like this standard seems to be presupposed in these discussions, for key points in particular arguments are alleged to be defective merely because they are disputed by some antireligious skeptics. Such a concept of proof seems impossibly high.

It also seems unfair, since this is not the standard of proof we require for nonreligious areas. Consider a court of law, for example. In a criminal case, to convict a person a jury needs enough evidence to regard the accused as guilty "beyond reasonable doubt," not "beyond any *possible* doubt." Jurors are not required to overcome the objections an ingenious philosopher might devise to show that it is logically possible that the accused is innocent. To find a person guilty, the jury merely has to overcome those objections which a "reasonable person" would regard as significant.

In a criminal case, since a guilty verdict may send a citizen to prison, it is appropriate to demand proof in this strong everyday sense which "excludes reasonable doubt." In other types of cases, even less "proof" may be needed. In a civil damage suit over an airplane crash, it is not necessary to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the crash was due to the airline's negligence, but only that it seems highly likely or probable that it was so "in the judgement of a prudent person." The task in this sort of case is to make a judgement which is in accordance with "the preponderance of the evidence." A "clear and convincing proof" in this context is defined in terms of "a high probability." This seems to me to be the kind of "reasonable case" we ought to strive for in religious matters as well. We ought to strive to make a judgement which is in accord with "the preponderance of evidence" and which seems highly probable or plausible.

Is Religion Guilty Until Proven Innocent?

One might think that these legal analogies imply that where the stakes are greater, such as in a criminal trial which might send a person to prison, it is appropriate to demand greater evidence. This principle is in general correct. Since the stakes religion poses are great indeed, potentially including eternal happiness, this would imply that the highest standard of proof should be adopted.

It is true, I think, that since religious faith is so significant, we ought to seek all the evidence we can and consider that evidence with great care and seriousness. However, at this point our legal analogies begin to fail us, because of the notion of "burden of proof." In a criminal court proceeding, the accused person is assumed to be innocent until proved guilty. Hence the burden of proof clearly rests with the prosecution.

Many skeptics apparently think that the same goes for religion, except that the "burden of proof" is on religious believers. Religious belief is presumed to be not innocent, but guilty until proven otherwise. Unless we can prove God's existence we must refrain from believing.

People who think like this imagine the religious situation to be something like the following: Suppose you are having an argument with someone over how many species of animals there are. Both of you agree that there are many species-cats, dogs, cows, and so on. You, however, believe in one species which your opponent does not believe in, say, the species of monsters residing in the Loch Ness. Your opponent claims that the burden of proof is on you if you want to believe in such monsters. Without strong *positive* evidence you would do better to refrain from believing in the Loch Ness monster.

Perhaps in this situation the burden of proof would be on you to come up with evidence for your belief. Perhaps if that evidence is less than conclusive, it would be wiser to suspend or withhold judgment. After all, we don't usually believe in monsters if we have no evidence of their reality. But belief in God is not at all comparable to belief in such a monster.

One important difference is that the Loch Ness monster is merely "one more thing." The two people that disagree about the monster agree about all the other animals. God, however, is not merely "one more thing." The person who believes in God and the person who does not believe in God do not merely disagree about God. *They disagree about the very character of the universe.* The believer is convinced that each and every thing exists because of God and God's creative activity. The unbeliever is convinced that natural objects exist "on their own," without any ultimate reason or purpose for being. In this situation there are no neutral "safe" facts all parties are agreed on, with one party believing some additional "risky facts." Rather, each side puts forward a certain set of facts and denies its opponents' alleged facts. There is risk on both sides.

A second important difference between the case of God and the case of the Loch Ness monster is that religious beliefs imply something fundamental about how life should be lived. Insofar as religious beliefs embody themselves in actions, suspending judgment is not possible. Even if it were possible to suspend judgment intellectually, it would by no means enable a person to avoid risk. It is clear that the faith of the religious believer and the faith of the atheist are equally risky. It is hard to see why any special burden of proof falls on the religious believer.

Cumulative Case Arguments

Rational inquiry into religious faith should not, therefore, be viewed as a case in which faith is assumed guilty until proven innocent. There are several important respects, however, in which such inquiry does resemble a legal case. One respect is simply that the judgment one makes will depend on the total evidence available. Trying to look for a single isolated argument on either side to serve as a "proof" is therefore a mistake. Rather, each side here will present a range of facts, drawn from many areas of human experience, to show that the "preponderance of evidence" is on its side. Meanwhile, each side will try to show that the facts which the other side puts forward do not really prove the other side's case or damage its own. Rather, each party in the dispute tries to show how those facts can be interpreted so as to support or at least fit one's own case.

It is clear, I think, that such a debate can never be settled in a mechanical fashion by simply adding up "points scored." To a large extent how a person evaluates the evidence will be a matter of proper interpretation and good judgment. It will also depend heavily on the kind of person making the judgment. But this is also true of legal cases. We are not yet to the stage (and hopefully never will be) where legal cases can be decided by computers. Jurors and judges make many decisions for which no formal rules can be given. If they are honest, reasonable people of good sense and judgment, they will make those decisions well. In the area of religious faith, each of us is his own juror. We should strive to make similarly wise judgments.

Let me try to summarize my conclusions so far:

1. Good evidence for religious faith will not be the absolute proof which some philosophers have looked for, but will be evidence which is sufficient to satisfy a reasonable person.
2. The case for religious faith will not be based on a single argument functioning as a proof, but upon the total evidence available from every region of human experience.
3. Religious faith is not guilty until proven innocent. No special burden of proof rests on the religious believer, since opponents of religious belief are committed to world views which are equally risky.
4. The evidence for religious faith cannot be evaluated in a mechanical fashion, but must be sensitively interpreted by each of us, who must ultimately take responsibility for being our own juror.

I believe that a strong "cumulative case" can be made for the truth of Christianity. A significant part of that cumulative case will be another, the cumulative case for belief in the God of Christianity. Christian theism makes sense of a very wide range of facts, which its rivals either cannot explain or else cannot explain very well. On the other side, the facts which those rivals put forward can be accounted for by theism, and the objections which those rivals put forward can be dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

The Case for Theism

The cumulative case for theism focuses on four fundamental mysteries. We bump up against these mysteries time and time again: the mystery of cosmic order, the mystery of purposive order, the mystery of a moral order, and the mystery of human personhood. These profound mysteries are pervasive in human experience. The mystery of cosmic wonder is felt in the strange way humans experience the universe as a "might-never- have-been." The mystery of purposive order is felt as we perceive the value produced by the order of nature, and it strongly suggests that there is mind at the root of the universe. The mystery of a moral order, felt in the experience of "oughtness," conveys to us an objectively real order of rightness and wrongness. The mystery of persons points us to the supreme person.

All of these mysteries are what Peter Berger calls "*signals of transcendence* within the . . . human condition." [1] They can plausibly be seen as clues pointing to the reality of a being with many of the characteristics of the Christian God. Christianity says that God is the creator of the universe, the reason why a universe which might- never-have-been exists. God is the mind who provided the order and structure which pervades the physical universe. Finally, God is seen by Christianity as the supreme person, who provides a moral order to that same universe by creating persons in His image and commanding those persons to respect the dignity and worth of persons and their creations, human and divine.

Each of these clues has exactly those characteristics we claimed one would expect to find in the calling cards a God would leave of Himself. They permeate human experience and are discernible by anyone, regardless of people's degree of education or sophistication. Nevertheless they are in no way coercive. A person must have a certain degree of sensitivity and openness to God to properly read and interpret the clues.

The space limitations of this essay do not permit me to explain and develop all of these mysteries. [2] Let us suppose that we have at least had our attention aroused by the first three mysteries. It does seem odd to us sometimes that anything at all in the universe exists. It seems even more odd that what does exist seems permeated by order and purposiveness. Most puzzling of all is the moral "ought" which is so evident in our human experience. Where should we look for more clues?

The most plausible place to look is at ourselves. If a supreme person exists, and has made human persons, then human personhood deserves a more careful look. If there are more clues to be found, that is a promising place to look for them. I shall therefore develop at some length this mystery, as a concrete illustration of how the broader cumulative case for theism can be worked out.

The Mystery of Persons

Human beings have always been puzzled about themselves. Socrates is reputed to have abandoned astronomy because he thought it was odd to try to learn about the stars when he did not even know his own self. Socrates found his own nature to be paradoxical. He could not decide if he was a creature akin to a monster or a being with a "simpler, gentler nature, partaking of something divine." [3]

Since the days of Socrates we have learned a great deal about the stars, but it is doubtful that we know more than Socrates about ourselves. If we care to look, though, there is much to see. The same ambiguity Socrates saw in himself is still present in us. The morning newspaper which includes stories of astounding heroism, brilliant ingenuity and selfless devotion also recounts the most sickening and degrading actions

imaginable. Human potential seems boundless, but the cartoon character Pogo said it best: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Yet even our evil deeds in some ways point to our greatness. Crabs and toads aren't capable of great wickedness. Only a creature with self-consciousness and freedom can be really evil. A deeper look at the total message of human nature seems amply justified.

Christians believe that as human persons we are not simply a part of the created order, but a special part of that order. Two things are special about us.

First, we are created in the image and likeness of God. This means that we have the capacity to be like God, to reflect His character. To be sure, Christianity balances this claim that we are created in God's image with the claim that we have rebelled against God. This rebellion, called sin, is bound to disturb the likeness between us and God. Still, if Christianity is true, then we should possess some unique "godlike" characteristics, even if they are distorted.

The second special thing about us, according to Christianity, is that we were created to enjoy a special relationship with God. We were made to know and enjoy God and cannot truly fulfill our destiny apart from him. Once more, the fact of our sinfulness qualifies this claim. Though we need God and cannot truly be happy without Him, we are usually far from understanding this. Instead, we constantly run away from God and try to replace Him with substitutes.

Still, if Christianity is true, if God exists and has created humans, certain characteristics should be present in human nature and in human desires. Let us look more closely at each of these two areas, and see if we find these characteristics.

Dust of the Earth and Stewards of Nature

The paradoxical character of human nature has many dimensions. On the one hand we are products of nature and on the other hand we transcend nature. We are in many ways the outcome of factors we have no control over. Each of us is born with a particular set of parents, in a particular physical and cultural environment. We are endowed with a particular genetic structure, which in turn determines a host of factors, including sex, height, potential intelligence, and so on. Each of these potentials is in turn affected by the environment in ways too complicated to fully understand. The end result is a creature who is the joint product of nature and nurture, with the two factors interacting to such a degree that the debate over which is most important becomes almost unsolvable.

A story similar to the above can be told about many species of animals. But in the case of human beings, there is more to the story. Each of us is certainly a product of nature, but each of us is certainly more than a product. For we possess imagination and the power of reflective choice. These capacities enable us to become, at least in part, producers and not mere products, creatures who are also creators.

Consider the power of imagination. To be able to imagine is to be able to escape from the prison of actuality. In imagination we not only think about what actually exists, but what *could* but does not yet exist. We can think not merely of the past, but about the future; not merely about what we have done, but about what we could do.

But not only can we imagine alternative actions, we can freely choose between these alternatives. All of us make such choices constantly. All of us know that we have this freedom and that we are responsible for our use of it.

Or at least we think we do. But do we really have this freedom? Determinists would claim that our experience of freedom is an illusion. We do not really transcend the natural order. Each and every human action is determined by the laws of nature; we are just as determined as anything else in nature.

Is the determinist right? We must begin by noting that here the determinist's frequent appeal to science is illegitimate. It may be that scientists must presuppose determinism as a working hypothesis. But the claim that everything is actually determined is not a scientific conclusion but a philosophical assumption. The question concerns the limits of science, which is not a question *within* science but a question *about* science.

Second, no one has actually discovered the scientific laws which the determinists believe underlie all human behavior. Though several generations of psychologists, sociologists, and social scientists of other stripes have labored mightily, no one knows laws of human behavior which are in any way comparable to the laws discovered by the physical sciences. Social scientists discover statistical correlations which hold in a probabilistic manner for limited groups of people for limited amounts of time. They learn, for example, that children who are abused are more likely to become child-abusers, or that men of a certain age group are more likely to buy shampoo if it is sold in a particular colored container.

Such probabilistic generalizations are very useful. An advertiser, for example, using this sort of information, can calculate the effectiveness of a certain type of ad which is being run for a certain income group in a particular country. But no one even pretends to be able to make precise predictions on the basis of this sort of information about the behavior of particular individuals in real life situations.

Of course most social scientists don't admit that people have genuine freedom. Though one political scientist has said that people have "quasi-free will"; they behave (surprise!) just as they would if they really did have free will!^[4] They usually take refuge in the claim that the determining laws exist but are too complicated to discover. This, however, is purely an expression of faith on their part and gains no credit from the genuine achievements of science.

The most compelling reason to believe in freedom, however, is simply that each one of us in practice is aware of our freedom and responsibility. It is easy enough to deny freedom of choice when we are theorizing, when we adopt the attitude of spectators. But just as is the case with morality, it is quite another thing to deny the reality of freedom when we are *living*.

Life is a series of choices. No one can live without considering alternatives, without asking which of the possible alternatives is *best*, which one I *ought* to choose. But I cannot even begin to consider which act I should perform unless I presuppose that I really do have a choice. If all my acts are determined, it might make sense for me to try to predict or guess what I will do, but it would make no sense to try to *decide* what I should do. Life is not a day at the racetrack where we sit back and bet on our own "race" as if we were spectators of ourselves. Even the most dogmatic determinist implicitly believes in freedom every time he or she is faced with the necessity of making a responsible choice!

Human freedom is of course limited in many ways. Our options are always finite and they are often weighted. No one can choose apart from their past. But when we praise and blame others and when we recognize our own responsibility for our choices, we clearly show that we know we are not simply helpless victims in life. We are products of nature, but we are also responsible choosers.

How is this human capacity for freedom to be explained? How is it that creatures who are obviously a part of nature can also partially transcend nature?

A Christian answers these questions by claiming that human beings are that part of nature which reflects a reality deeper than nature. We can partially transcend nature because we are made in the image of the one who is totally transcendent of nature. We are creative beings with the power of free choice because we were made in the likeness of the person who created the whole of nature by a free choice.

Of course many people have used this power of choice in dreadful ways. And in some ways this misuse of freedom diminishes and destroys freedom. If we continually give in to an evil impulse, eventually we lose the ability to resist at all. Christianity teaches that in a mysterious way the whole human race has done something like this. We have-freely-given in to evil and have become "slaves to sin." This is a condition which we cannot set right just by making a New Year's resolution or turning over a new leaf. But this "bondage to evil" does not mean human freedom is an illusion. It rather means that God takes our freedom so seriously that he allows our actions to produce their full consequences.

So, on the whole, human beings look pretty much as they should if Christianity is true. We are free beings who partially transcend nature, though we have terribly misused our freedom. Such freedom is hard for a naturalist to explain. Please notice that this point in no way hinges on the question as to whether God created human beings by a "special act" or through a process of evolution. The point is that nature contains something that transcends itself, something we would not expect nature to produce if nature existed "on its own." If human beings have been produced by natural processes, then those natural processes are evidently guided by a purposive design. If nature can produce something that transcends nature, then this says something surprising about nature.

Responsible freedom by no means exhausts the image of God in man. Essentially the same point could have been made by focusing on creativity or rationality. The point is that besides the calling cards God has left in nature and in the moral order, He has left one fundamental clue to his reality, which gives every one of us who has any degree of self-knowledge a chance to discover him. That clue is ourselves. Perhaps Pogo should also have said, "We have found a clue to the universe, and it is us."

The Need to Believe

We noted that two things about human beings must be special if Christianity is true. First, we must have some special godlike characteristics, for we are made in God's image.

Second, since God made us for a special purpose which includes loving fellowship with himself, we must in some way need God, desire to know him. Or at least we must be constituted in such a way that we cannot find ultimate peace and fulfillment apart from Him.

Is this the case? Indeed it looks like it is. Down through the ages we have been incurably religious. The urge to believe in and worship a "higher power" is present in virtually every human culture.

Someone might cite Communist countries as proof that human beings can live without their gods. But religious faith has thrived in countries like Russia, China, and East Germany, despite generations of opposition, ranging from petty harassment to violent persecution. And before claiming that Marxist societies are truly "secular" we ought to ponder carefully the extent to which Marxism itself functions like a religion.

Usually, however, the skeptic will admit that religious needs are prevalent but reject the idea that this says something deep about human nature. The existence of these religious urges is explained by various natural factors. Then the skeptic tries to turn the tables. The fact that people need to believe in God is a sign that God is an illusion. The whole business is wish-fulfillment; God is a crutch for the weak, an indulgence for people with a flabby intellectual conscience.

This widespread assumption that the need to believe in God discredits religious belief is really remarkable. It takes a fact which must be true if God is real and has made humans to fellowship with Himself and tries to count that fact as evidence against God's reality!

Suppose that it is true that human beings have a fundamental need to believe in and worship a God. Should this be interpreted as a sign that faith in God is suspicious in nature because it is likely to be a product of

wish-fulfillment? Or should it be interpreted as verifying the existence of a "God-shaped hole" in human nature, which was implanted by God himself?

Critics often remark in this context that the existence of a need does not guarantee that it will be satisfied. A shipwrecked sailor on a life raft may have a desperate need and a burning desire for pure water. He may want it so badly that he hallucinates its reality. Clearly this doesn't mean there is water available to him. Likewise, a person may need or want God but God may not be there for him or anyone.

Notice, however, that the analogy breaks down. The sailor as an individual may not get any water, but it would be very odd if he had this need and water did not exist. The fact that people in general have a need for water is strong evidence that there is such a thing as water, though this does not imply that an individual person will get water on any specific occasion. In a similar manner, the fact that we have a deep need to believe in and find God strongly suggests that God is real, though of course this does not mean that any one of us will actually discover God and establish a relation with him. It would be very odd indeed if we had a fundamental need for something which did not exist.

The Craving for Eternity

Up to this point we have talked in general terms about a religious need, or a need for God or gods. What is this need (or these needs) like, in more specific terms? What are the contours of the "God-shaped hole"? This need shows itself in three primary dimensions that are closely related. These are the desire for eternal life, the desire for eternal meaning, and the desire for eternal love.

The desire for *eternal life* is the most evident manifestation of the need for God. Burial mounds of the most primitive societies show that from time immemorial people have longed for life beyond the grave. Today we still share that longing. The theme song for the TV program "Fame" includes the chorus, "I want to live forever." But now many of us lack the robust confidence of previous societies that the longing will be satisfied.

What could be more natural than death? Every human being will die; every member of every animal species will die. Yet what is more unnatural than death? How strange that we never experience death without seeing it as a breach, an intrusion into the way things ought to be. Yet we have never experienced things any other way, and in truth we can't even imagine how the current natural order, with its delicate ecology, could go on without death. Yet deep in our hearts we feel death should not be, was not meant to be.

The second dimension of our craving for eternity is the desire for *eternal meaning*. One of the most troubling things about time is the way it robs our activities of their meaning. Who has not looked at the wreck of ancient civilizations, buried beyond memory, and wondered what purpose was served by the stupendous labors of those millions of people? I have often wondered whether in two hundred years anyone will care about anything I have done, or even know that I have lived. Yet all of us want our lives to have a meaning that lasts; we want it so badly that the ephemeral character of our achievements threatens to undo the meaningfulness they actually possess.

This second dimension deepens our understanding of the first. For it reveals that the eternal life we want is not merely an extension of the present. It is for a different kind of life, a life in which one activity would not merely be followed by another, a life in which our activities would have depth and thickness. We want our lives to possess a meaning and value which is solid and impervious to the vagaries of time and chance. We want lives which are eternally meaningful.

What would such a life be like? We do not know in any clear or definite way, but surely the deepest clue we have is the love of one person for another. Everyone knows that "love makes the world go round"; everyone craves love and feels at bottom that it is the most important thing in life. Yet earthly love, even when it is happy and fortunate, does not satisfy our deepest urges. This is not to say that earthly loves are

not rich and valuable. It is not to say that romantic love is not tingly, nor that married love cannot be rich and warm.

Strangely enough, even in our most happy and treasured moments of love, we often feel something is missing. We find ourselves wanting more but not knowing what is the more we want. As Aldous Huxley once said, "There comes a time when one says, even of Shakespeare, even of Beethoven, 'Is that all?'" We are anxious and subtly distressed, even when-especially when-we experience moments we know should be the happiest ones in our lives.

Why is this so? We crave eternity, and earthly loves resemble eternity enough to kindle our deepest love. Yet earthly loves are not eternal. (Though they can be *made* eternal, transformed by being taken up into eternity.) Our sense that love is the clue to what it's all about is right on target, but earthly love itself merely points us in the right direction.

What we want is an eternal love, a love which loves us unconditionally, accepts us as we are, while helping us to become all we can become. We want a love which is not subject to fortune and fate, a love in which we can be fully known and fully appreciated. We want a love which cares enough about us to want our best, a love which knows what is good and is hard enough to seek it, not merely a sloppy sentimental love which would gratify our whims and capricious urges.

In short, we want *God*, the God of Christian faith. He is the suitor who courts us, the one who is love and who loves with a terrible abandon. He is the one who loves for time and eternity, fixed and unshakable in His purposes, totally unselfish in His desires for us. Such a love would give our lives meaning, and such an ongoing life of love is what we crave in our hope that death is not the final word.

Thus we see that God has hardly left us bereft of clues to His reality and character. When, for some reason, we are blind to the mysteries of the universe, we should still see the mystery of our own being. And when we are not reflective enough to see the mystery of our own being, we still ought to be able to see God in the deepest desires of our own heart. The hard part is not finding the clue, but deciding to trust what we find.

Thus I conclude there are good reasons for believing in God, even though it seems plausible that a person may be reasonable in believing without such reasons. The reasons can be seen in the pervasive clues or signals that God has provided in human experience. These clues can be presented to form a weighty cumulative case for theism, and that case can be a part of a cumulative case for Christianity. To this evidence we must also add the evidence of religious experience and revelation. The evidence is real and genuine, not coercive to the person who wants to reject it, but easily accessible to the person who is looking for evidence for God.

NOTES

[1]Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), p. 52.

[2]See my *The Quest for Faith* (InterVarsity Press, 1986) for a fuller treatment.

[3]Phaedrus 230a.

[4]Michael Lessnoff, *The Structure of Social Science* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 65.

***copyright (c) 1995-2002 Leadership U. All rights reserved.
This site is part of the Telling the Truth Project.***

Updated: 14 December 2002