

# IFH MONTHLY

Irish Freethinkers & Humanists

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## 1. WHAT'S IN *IRISH FREETHINKER* - SUMMER 2024

The Summer 2024 edition of *IRISH FREETHINKER* is to be published in May and will be dispatched by post to subscribers; it will be otherwise available for purchase in shops.

The contents are as follows:

- *Personal Basis of Ethics*
  - *Losing Religion, Finding Myself*
  - *Neoreligiosity - Religion & Science*
  - *Humanism & a United Ireland*
  - *Thomas Paine & The Polity of Blood*
  - *Religion Outside School Hours*
  - *World View of Naturalism*
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  - *International Developments*
- *Gender & Grammar*

The IFH website ([www.irishfreethinkers.com](http://www.irishfreethinkers.com)) continues to be developed and editions of *IRISH FREETHINKER* for the period before May-June 2020 and back to Autumn 2016 will be gradually put up on it, as eventually will back copies of *IFH NEWS/MONTHLY*s. There is now also an online payment system on the website. Copies of recent editions of these items not online may be purchased through the site.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR THE AUTUMN '24 EDITION OF *IRISH FREETHINKER* IS 15 AUGUST 2024 (Editor: ifh.sde@gmail.com)

## 2. THE MAGIC OF CHRISTIANITY

*Daltún Ó Ceallaigh*

Christianity is the most successful of the world religions. It is far from having a majority of religious believers on the planet with only about 25% of humanity who at least nominally subscribe to its creed. However, it is still in the lead with just over 2 billion adherents. But only just, with Muslims making up slightly under that figure and growing more quickly, with the

prospect of that faith overtaking Christianity in the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, the question arises as to why Christianity has got as far as it has in history.

Christians like to think that it is the philosophical side of their religion that has led to its appeal. They refer to teachings about love thy neighbour, justice, compassion, forgiveness,

peace, and universal brotherhood and sisterhood (today 'personhood'?). Of course, Christianity in practice, at least institutionally, has often ironically been the negation of all of these features and, not infrequently, in the grossest form. In addition, immortality consoles the existentially insecure.

From a political point of view, what really led to the propulsion of Christianity onto the world stage was the proclamation of its toleration in the Roman Empire through the Edict of Milan in 313 CE, issued by the filicidal and uxoricidal Constantine, and then its formal establishment as the State religion thereof by the Edict Thessalonica in 380 CE.

However, what we want to concentrate on considering here is the inherent attraction of Christianity for people. To a certain extent, it would indeed have been the philosophical aspects mentioned, especially for the educated and intellectual populace. Yet, those so concerned were scarce in the early days of evangelisation and are not exactly preponderant today. It seems quite clear from historical research that the main selling point for the new religion was in fact magic.

Jesus was said to walk on water, raise the dead, heal the afflicted, and cast out demons, if only to relocate them in a herd of swine which consequentially committed collective suicide. (Obviously, the messiah was not exactly an animal lover.) More mundanely, he could provide loaves and fishes from nowhere and

actually change water into wine if that was needed to quaff one's thirst and accompany mastication. The ultimate was that he was said to have proclaimed himself as divine (outrageously in competition with Roman Emperors) and, subsequent to execution, have resurrected, appeared to disciples and then ascended into heaven. In other words, he was the supreme magician.

His magic was then to continue posthumously with the likes of holy water, sacred relics, weeping statues, and occasional apparitions by him and his mother. One has also to take account of alleged stigmata and ongoing 'miracles' of all sorts. And so it goes on.

The acme of the magical mentality was reached in early Christian theological speculation about whether or not the 'Virgin' Mary's hymen remained intact and whether or not Jesus defecated. Fortunately contemporary Christians seem to spare us such unsavoury ruminations.

As time passed, there was more emphasis on the philosophy than the magic. But the magic has never gone away as we well know in modern Ireland with pilgrims regularly gathering expectantly at Knock or the faithful more routinely engaging in symbolic cannibalism through partaking of the body and blood of Christ at communion.

Indeed, one wonders about how far to this day, throughout the world, Christianity is sustained by its fitful philosophy and how far by its enduring magic.



*Daniel James Sharp*

*(An abridged text)*

**In December 2023, Ed West wrote for *The Spectator* about a phenomenon I have been interested in for quite a while: the rise of a new counter-Enlightenment that defends religion, and Christianity in particular, based on its social value rather than because it is true. West termed such defenders of faith(s?) the “New Theists”. The New Theists, says West, argue “not that religion is true, but that it is useful, and that Christianity has made the West unusually successful.”**

I am tempted to date New Theism to the publication in 2019 of Tom Holland’s book *‘Dominion’*. Holland’s argument is that almost all of Western culture is essentially Christian, even the parts seemingly antagonistic to Christianity. Holland wants to claim everything from gay rights to science to liberalism to the Enlightenment itself and even atheism as an outgrowth of Christianity.

*‘Dominion’* has been very influential since its publication. But, as West rightly notes, this sort of argument has a long history. And in its current form, it precedes Tom Holland. As Adam Wakeling writes in *‘The Freethinker’*:

*“Perhaps no public figure has become more associated with this argument than Jordan Peterson. Peterson does not appear to believe in a literal supernatural being, but believes that the secular ethics of the modern West are based in Judaeo-Christian values and it would be better if we acted as though the Christian God did exist.”*

So, since Peterson seems to have really started publicly obfuscating on religion in 2017, perhaps that is a better origin date for New Theism.

New Theism, of course, is named in opposition to New Atheism. West again: “Like New

Atheism, [New Theism] largely involved unbelievers, and argued for the same Western liberal tradition.” I think New Theism is broader than West allows here - for example, Theo Hobson, another of its champions, is a theologian (and, incidentally, Hobson’s arguments for New Theism precede 2017).

### A Social Phenomenon

Where West really misunderstands the relationship between New Theism and New Atheism is in New Theism’s much narrower focus: it is concerned only, or at least mainly, with religion as a social phenomenon. The New Atheists were concerned with both of the really big questions about religion: its truth and its utility. True, there were differences of emphasis. Richard Dawkins was much more interested in the God hypothesis, and Christopher Hitchens in the evils of religion. But they all dealt with both questions, while the New Theists are only really bothered about one of them. Hobson himself recently put it thus in a review of a book called *‘Coming to Faith Through Dawkins’*:

*“This is the real flaw in New Atheism: it inherits a vague rational humanism that it has to pretend is natural, or common sense. It’s an important task of Christian apologetics to point this out, to insist that the moral assumptions of our culture have Christian roots. But most Christian apologists fail to focus on this and get bogged down in tedious arguments about first causes, and try to make a rational case for God, and even the historical likelihood of the resurrection. Most of these contributors take this approach, some citing the apologetics of William Lane Craig and Alister McGrath (who is this book’s co-editor).*

*“To my mind, this is deeply unhelpful. It*

sinks to Dawkins' level. A wise apologetics is minimalist. It calmly exposes the moral muddles of rational humanists, their weak grasp of the history of ideas. But it doesn't overstate the role of intellectual argument in belief."

### God Argument Lost

And this is telling. The God argument has been lost; all that is left is the argument from utility. The near certainty of God's non-existence has been apparent since long before New Atheism, but it now seems that the argument has been given up entirely. New Theism, then, is a rear-guard action, a desperate attempt to salvage religion even when its core has been gutted and even as the number of its adherents dwindles by the day. It is also an insult to the truly devout, for whom the truth of religion is very, even supremely, important.

Now, with the faith in tatters, the New Theists are often not even, or are barely, theists. And they now spend most of their time proclaiming that Christianity is fundamental to Western civilisation. In so doing, everything institutional Christianity ever opposed until it was beaten into submission - liberalism, secularism, gay rights, free speech, to name a few - are claimed for Christianity!

An important exception to the above is Justin Brierley, a believing Christian apologist who tries to convince his readers of Christianity's truth while also championing it in the fashion of Holland and the other New Theists. His latest book, *'The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God: Why New Atheism Grew Old and Secular Thinkers Are Considering Christianity Again'*, is an explicitly New Theist text.

Writer Peter Thonemann comments [re.

*'Dominion'*]:

*"Mr. Holland's argument about the continuing legacy of Christian sensibilities involves selecting one particular winding strand of Christianity - the one that happens to terminate in our presentday value system - as the "real" one. Mr. Holland postulates a golden thread of Nice Christianity, directly linking Jesus' teachings with the civil rights movement, the end of apartheid, MeToo and so forth. When large numbers of actual Christians between Paul and Pope Francis turn out to have subscribed to Nasty Christianity (butchering Albigensians, incinerating sodomites and such-like), Mr. Holland blithely comments that 'the*

*Christian revolution still had a long way to run.'* This argument - that everything Nice in our contemporary world derives from Christian values, and everything Nasty in the actual history of Christendom was just a regrettable diversion from the true Christian path - seem to me to run dan-

*gerously close to apologetic."*

Perhaps Wakeling puts it most concisely: "According to Genesis, God created man in his image - **yet the morality of the Bible is not humanist**" (my emphasis). Indeed - and it is very often anti-humanist, with its injunctions to slavery, rape, and genocide and its threats of eternal torture for nonbelievers.

### Defanging Christianity

Secular liberalism has spent centuries defanging Christianity (one of civilisation's most noble achievements, though the task is still incomplete). Christianity did not inspire secular humanism - and least of all did institutional Christianity, which, as Charles Freeman notes,



Daniel James Sharp

became an imperial and authoritarian structure in the fourth century. Once it became dominant in that period, it did not challenge slavery or wealth inequality or militarism, nor did it do any of the other nice things that it should have done if its essence was as Holland says. On Holland's thesis, the millennium and more of Christian supremacy should have produced a paradise of liberalism and democracy long before the Enlightenment arose. The emergence of secular modernity has other roots, many of which predate Christianity by a long time and most of which were almost pulled up by Christianity before they had produced even the tiniest of shoots.

### Religion's Persistence

West writes that “[r]ather than ushering in a golden age of enlightenment, the collapse of American Christianity gave rise to a new intolerance towards anybody who diverged from progressive opinion.” Again, it is slightly unclear what West means in the full context. Does he mean that the New Atheists believed that destroying religion would ‘usher in a golden age of enlightenment’? If so, he is plain wrong. Hitchens, for example, wrote in *God Is Not Great* that “[r]eligious faith is ... ineradicable. It will never die out, or at least not until we get over our fear of death, and of the dark, and of the unknown, and of each other.” No New Atheist claimed that the world would become an enlightened paradise after the demise of religion (which was unlikely or even impossible, anyway), or that religion was responsible for all the world's ills.

The point about the impossibility of fully throwing off religion is quite an important one, so I shall let Matt Johnson discuss it further. From his *Quillette* piece critiquing Konstantin Kisin's argument against the New Atheists:

*“The title of Kisin's article is ‘The Atheism Delusion’. He now regards religion as ‘useful and inevitable.’ The argument that religion is*

*inevitable is one the New Atheists have always taken seriously: Hitchens described religion as ‘ineradicable’; [Daniel] Dennett's book ‘Breaking the Spell’ examined the ways in which religion evolves and survives over time; a central part of Harris's career is channelling the religious impulse into secular forms of introspection and mindfulness; and Dawkins acknowledges that religion may reflect a deep psychological need among many people. Where the New Atheists part company with Kisin is over his argument that religion is useful - particularly in the third decade of the 21st Century.”*

### Causes of Social Woes

With that out of the way, on to the meat. West writes that “The atomising effect of secularism has become extreme. While America's poor filled their God-shaped hole with drugs and alcohol, its rich did so with politics.” By the final clause, I think West means to refer to Critical Social Justice ideology, or ‘wokeism’, as his following reference to progressive intolerance implies. But these are just unevidenced assertions. There are plenty of other explanations for atomisation, drug and alcohol abuse, and the rise of wokeism, and why should one prefer secularisation over all others without any evidence?

Indeed, poverty, genetics, mental health problems, and the social environment are among the many more convincing explanations for drug and alcohol abuse than some nebulous ‘secularism’.

Most fatal to West's argument here is the fact that the social woes he lists are positively correlated with religiosity, while the opposite holds true for secularism, as the sociologist Phil Zuckerman has copiously shown. Or, as I have put it previously:

*“Though we can't rerun the tape to produce a definitive answer to the question of whether religion has overall been good or bad for*

humanity, perhaps we can draw some conclusions from the state of our existing societies. Put very broadly, and with the caveat that the causation/correlation relationships are complex, the data shows that more religious societies are poorer, less safe, and less happy while more secular societies are richer, happier, and more just. If religion is good for us, why should this be so?

“I would also argue more directly that nobody with even a shred of dignity or decency would wish to live in an extremely religious society. We have seen, and can see even now, what such societies look like, and it is not pretty. One need only look at the Muslim world or pre-Enlightenment Europe to see that where religion rules, tyranny and poverty are the norms. If you think religion is good for you, I invite you to consider living in a society where it reigns supreme; I think you will be rushing back to the decadent, post-Enlightenment, secular West very quickly.”

West, naturally, differs with all this, and might object that he goes into more detail in the very article I am criticising:

“[T]his period has also coincided with a proliferation of social science studies pointing to the benefits of religion - both belief and practice - on child welfare, social capital, individual happiness and most of all the suppression of anxiety, the cause of that modern-day ‘mental health epidemic’.”

Fair enough, one might say: delusion does have its benefits. I can only repeat what I have already said: the negatives outweigh the positives, and these positives can all be gotten without the negatives. Religion might help with the problems West lists, but much better, I think, to provide adequate healthcare, housing, income, and the like.

The studies to which West points are also rather undermined by the data referenced

above, which, among other things, suggest that as societies become more prosperous and more just, the need for religion, particularly to salve our social ills, evaporates. Perhaps religion has some benefits for the individual or the social group, but not so much as West seems to think. And is it not curious that religion is most popular among the destitute, the crisis-ridden, and the weary? It is almost as if the God delusion preys on desperation.

### The Wokeism Point

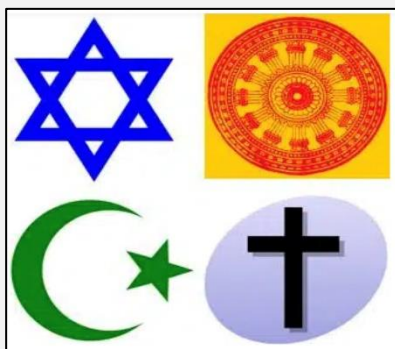
In my previous article above, I also addressed the wokeism point:

“I know that the temptation to champion traditionalism and religion against the tide of Critical Social Justice (or, colloquially, and although it’s a term I’ve come to dislike, ‘wokeism’) is very strong. But consider: is

championing another vile dogma really the solution? Of course it isn’t. (Besides, wokeism is hardly the greatest threat in the world today; jihadist Islam and the grotesque alliance of Trumpism with Christian nationalism in the US are, I would argue, much graver

ones.) The solution is to keep fighting for free, secular societies based upon reason and universalism and human rights. This fight, and the societies produced by it, count among humanity’s greatest achievements. Much better to go forward in this enterprise, rather than embracing religion (or wokeism).”

No matter how exhaustively the word “religion” is redefined, there’s plenty of evidence that secularization has taken place across the Western world. But there’s far less evidence for the opportunistic claim that this shift is responsible for the emergence of another socio-political movement. Those who say otherwise may have a “god-shaped hole” in their own lives, but they shouldn’t assume that everyone



else suffers from the same affliction. More and more commentators are attempting to resuscitate religion under the guise of anti-woke politics, but they're just exchanging one dogma for another.

On the argument that the West (though I would prefer to say 'liberal democracy') needs Christianity to combat the various threats it faces, much could and has been said. Michael Shermer has expertly done so already, along the way demolishing the other tenets of New Theism, so I shall simply recommend his piece and quote the central point: "Atheism isn't the alternative to the Judaeo-Christian worldview, Enlightenment Humanism is."

### Other Religions

For *The Freethinker*, and with reference to the dangers posed by other religions, I recently wrote:

*"[F]rom Israel and Gaza to the US and India - not to mention the bloodstained steppes of Ukraine, where Orthodox-inspired and supported Russian troops are trying to destroy a young democracy [indeed, in March this year, the Russian Orthodox Church declared Putin's assault a 'holy war'] - religion, in various forms, remains one of the world's greatest threats to democratic and secular ideals, and to the ideals of peace and freedom. How far we secularists still have to go! And perhaps it really is not too much to say that 'religion poisons everything.'"*

West's true sympathies are, I think, revealed by his conclusion: "But Christianity is not some meditation method or get-happy-quick guide. It is a deeply strange idea. Which makes its triumph over the West all the more unlikely - dare one say, miraculous."

One might as well say the same about any hugely influential religion that has ever existed (here one might instance the 'miraculously' rapid spread of Islam) but that would be to ignore the very worldly and often grubby ways

in which they gained power. As Charles Freeman notes in my *Freethinker* interview with him:

*"One of the frustrating things about Dominion is that it does not mention the emperor Theodosius and his Council of Constantinople of 381, which fully declared the Trinity, and basically that said everybody who disagreed with its formulation of Christianity were 'demented heretics'. This made Christianity into an authoritarian religion allied with the imperial Roman state. ..."*

*"Holland is a distinguished classicist and a very good writer but in Dominion he completely missed the way in which Christianity was integrated into the authoritarian setup of the Roman Empire and how it developed very conservative, authoritarian views. Christianity became a very conservative force in a way that it did not need to be. Christianity was shaped by political and historical forces and could have taken a different path, as shown by the Quakers, who went back to the more radical, earlier forms of Christianity."*

There is not much miraculous about cosying up to state authority to expand your influence, as I think West would agree.

### Meaning

And from my own piece on religion, quoted earlier:

*"One last thing remains. There is the question of meaning. Without religion, without the supernatural, how can humans even bear to get up in the morning? I think I have obliquely answered this already: secular societies are happier. But I'd like to add that this, to me, is an impoverished view of humanity. Without delusion, it essentially says, what's the point?"*

*"Well, there is art, and literature, and science, and philosophy; there are friends and family; there is sex, and parties, and music, and love. What more meaning can you possibly need? If you need the supernatural to find the*

*transcendent, I pity you.*

*“In the end, I can make weaker and stronger versions of my argument. At its strongest, I can say that religion is not just harmless but harmful. At its weakest, I can say that religion is irrelevant. Either way, religion is not positively good for us. We have no need of it. Humanity is weak and foolish, yes, but it also contains what Saul Bellow in his great novel ‘The Adventures of Augie March’ so beautifully called the ‘universal eligibility to be noble.’”*

### **The Path for Humanity**

I submit, finally, then, that the highest, noblest path that humanity can pursue is one without religion. We must face the uncaring universe with our chins up. Abandoning religion is not

a guarantee of utopia (indeed, utopia is unattainable anyway), but it is a good start. We are mere apes, yes- but apes capable of art and science and love. Supernaturalism, which is the core of religion, is a distraction from, even a negation of, this most important and inspiring of truths.

So let’s reject the false, dangerous delusions of religion, and be worthy of humanity - that is, of ourselves.

In short: Christianity (and religion in general) is neither true nor particularly useful, and the New Theism is but a sputtering and desperate response to that fact.

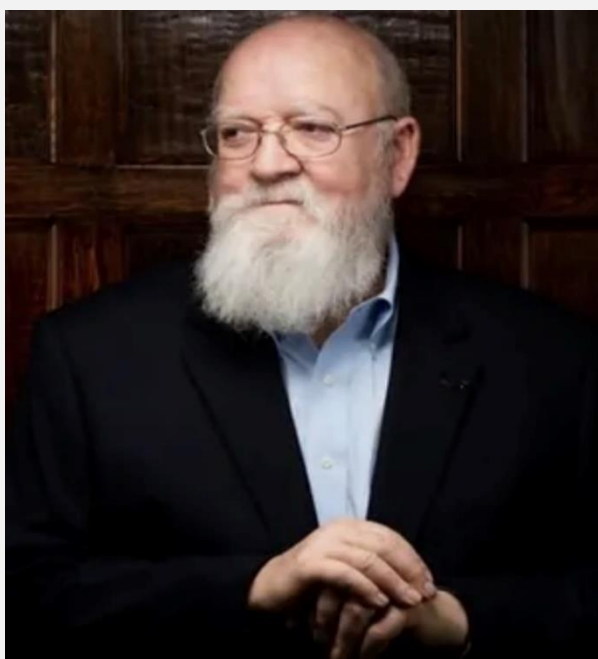
*Reproduced from [‘The Freethinker’](#) [UK]*

4.

**DANIEL DENNETT**

## **We'll miss you, Daniel Dennett**

**We will miss him enormously,  
SANAL EDAMARUKU,  
Rationalist International**



With heavy hearts, we bid farewell to Daniel Dennett, a luminary of philosophical inquiry and a beacon of rational thought. Dennett's journey came to an end on 19th April, 2024, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to illuminate the realms of philosophy and cognitive science.

Born with an insatiable curiosity in 1942, Dennett's intellectual prowess knew no bounds. His relentless pursuit of truth led him to explore the depths of consciousness, evolution, and the nature of mind with unparalleled vigour. Armed with a sharp intellect and an unwavering commitment to reason, Dennett challenged conventional wisdom and inspired generations of thinkers to embrace scepticism and critical inquiry.

Throughout his illustrious career, Dennett's contributions to the field of philosophy were nothing short of groundbreaking. His seminal works, including *Consciousness Explained* and *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, revolutionized our understanding of the mind and the



mechanisms of evolution. With eloquence and precision, Dennett dismantled the barriers of dogma and superstition, inviting us to contemplate the mysteries of existence with clarity and courage.

Beyond his scholarly pursuits, Dennett was a steadfast advocate for rationalism, secularism and scientific literacy. His fearless defence of rationality in the face of religious orthodoxy earned him both admiration and controversy, yet he remained undeterred in his quest for truth and enlightenment.

As we mourn the loss of Daniel Dennett, let us remember not only the brilliance of his mind but also the warmth of his spirit. He leaves behind a vast intellectual legacy that will

continue to shape our understanding of the universe for years to come. Though he may no longer walk among us, his ideas will endure, guiding future generations towards a brighter, more enlightened future.

In the words of Dennett himself: “The truth, whatever it is, will be vindicated eventually. Just keep searching.” And so, we shall, inspired by the indelible legacy of Daniel Dennett.

Rest in peace, dear Daniel. Your light shall forever shine in the annals of human thought.

**Daniel Dennett**

**(March 28, 1942 – April 19, 2024)**

**5. U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**AT THE 55TH SESSION OF THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, HUMANISTS INTERNATIONAL CALLED FOR MORE WORK TO BE DONE IN TACKLING HATE AND INTOLERANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF**

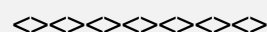
The statement was delivered by Humanists International’s Advocacy Officer, Leon Langdon, and focused on the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ recent reports. Humanists International’s statement endorsed several of the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations in her report on “transformative responses to hate and intolerance”, including intercommunity dialogue, positive counterspeech, and education initiatives, as well as outlawing speech which amounts to incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

The statement also underscored the importance of such responses in the face of nationalism, far-right populism, religious fundamentalism and the rise in identity politics. It also mentioned the amplifying effect of social media algorithms - something which had been raised in a statement delivered at the 54th

Session of the Human Rights Council in the context of Pakistan.

The statement also highlighted efforts “by actors seeking to use this Council as a vehicle to legitimize blasphemy laws.” In July last year, at the 53rd Session of the Human Rights Council, the Organization of Islamic States (OIS) pushed through a Resolution which condemned the desecration of sacred books and threatened years of U.N. consensus on how to tackle religious intolerance in line with international law. Humanists International delivered a statement at that time too, opposing the approach being taken by the OIS.

At this current 55th session, Humanists International also joined a statement made during a Panel on Countering Religious Hatred. The statement, delivered by Article 19, called for the reaffirmation of commitment from the international community to Resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action, while similarly condemning hatred on the basis of religion or belief. These instruments outline the narrow conditions necessary for the criminalization of hate speech.



6.

**HUMANIST MEETINGS IN IRELAND**

**Belfast Freethinkers**

Meeting quarterly, 8.00 p.m.  
Holiday Inn, University St, Belfast  
Contact: Roger 0777 858 3435  
[roger.kelly.2@ntlworld.com](mailto:roger.kelly.2@ntlworld.com)

**North Down Humanists**

1st Sunday of month, 11.00 a.m.  
Coffee Cure, Bangor Castle  
Contact: Andy Barr, 078 889 20063

**North Dublin Humanist Community**

3rd Monday of month  
Contact: Alan Tuffery  
[atuffery@tcd.ie](mailto:atuffery@tcd.ie)

**South Dublin Humanist Community (SDHC)**

Contact: 086 857 2005  
[Janielazar@gmail.com](mailto:Janielazar@gmail.com)  
Mailing List: [southdublinhumanistcommunity](mailto:southdublinhumanistcommunity)

**Humanist Association of Ireland**

Monthly meeting at rotating venues, mostly  
Dublin  
Details of next meeting at [humanism.ie](http://humanism.ie)  
or HAI Facebook Page

**Westport Humanists**

2nd Sunday of month at 12.30 p.m.  
Wyatt Hotel  
Contact: Seamus O'Connell  
087 245 3536/098 50802  
[shavoc37@gmail.com](mailto:shavoc37@gmail.com)

**Cork Humanists**

Contact: Geraldine O'Neill 086 812 8892

<http://corkhumanists.weebly.com>

**Humanists West (Galway)**

Last Sun of month, 12.00 noon  
Garden Room, Ardilaun House Hotel, Taylor's  
Hill, Galway  
Contact: Sheila Garrity 086 603 5104  
[spgarrity@hotmail.com](mailto:spgarrity@hotmail.com) / [humanistswest@gmail.com](mailto:humanistswest@gmail.com)

**Kilkenny Humanist Group**

2nd Sunday of month, 11.00 a.m.  
Langton House Hotel, Kilkenny,  
Contact: Patrick Cassidy 089 463 0005  
[patrickacassidy@gmail.com](mailto:patrickacassidy@gmail.com)

**Mid-West Humanists (Limerick, Clare, Tipperary)**

3rd Wednesday of month in Limerick  
Contact: Peter 086 815 5102  
[info@midwesthumanists.com](mailto:info@midwesthumanists.com)  
Also check <https://midwesthumanists.com>

**North West Humanists**

2nd Tuesday of month  
Radisson Hotel, Sligo  
Contact: Gill Bell 087 295 8206  
[humanistgb@gmail.com](mailto:humanistgb@gmail.com)

**Waterford Humanists**

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of month, 7.30 p.m.  
Phil Grimes Pub, John St, Waterford  
Contact: Teresa [graham22@gmail.com](mailto:graham22@gmail.com)



## THEY SAID



*Life is a rose that withers in the iron fist of dogma, and it was France that forced open the deadly fingers of the ecclesiastic and allowed the rose to bloom again. And France is in the vanguard today in the repudiation of the deadly doctrine that some Bedouin tribe invented in the desert long ago, that life is a mean and contemptible thing, and that renunciation of life is the greatest virtue.*

George Moore

*... where there is faith, there is no need for investigation ... Investigation is the destruction of faith. For he that investigates has not yet found. He who investigates cannot believe.*

John Chrysostom

*It is to satisfy this unhealthy curiosity that ... men are led to investigate the secrets of nature, which are irrelevant to our lives.*

St Augustine

*God did not create man; man created God.*

Sigmund Freud

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**IRISH FREETHINKER**

***An Saorsmaointeoir***

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