

## The Rev. Dr. Marks Isaacs Refutes Atheism Argument at UTS Speakers' Forum

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The Rev. Dr. Mark Isaacs—Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Wurtemberg in Rhinebeck, NY and assistant professor of Economics and Social History at Barrytown College and Ministry and Management at UTS—developed a powerful argument against atheist thought at the latest UTS Speakers' Forum at the Massena Mansion in Barrytown last night.

He began by defining terms, saying that “often people use the same terms but in their minds they have very different meanings for those terms, which makes a discussion very difficult.”

Theology means theo=God, and logy means the study of, so theology is the study of God.

Atheism is A=no, and theism God or Gods, so atheism means there are no Gods or God.

Dr. Isaacs pointed out that just about all humankind throughout history have believed in Gods or one God. Of the five major world religions today—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the latter three all believe in one God.

Atheism is a Greek word in origin, but developed as a way of thought around the time of the French Revolution in 1789, Dr. Isaacs said, when the left-wing radical revolutionists rejected the political and religious traditions of the period and sought their brand of freedom and equality through bloody violence, where many people lost their heads at the guillotine, including the Catholic clergy.

The French Revolution would give birth over the next hundred years, to a variety of God-denying political ideologies that would seize control of Russia, China and other countries around the world and commit horrifying atrocities in the name of establishing atheist utopians, Dr. Isaacs explained. These regimes, by the 20th century were responsible for murdering hundreds of millions of people, he said.

Atheists like to point out that many terrible acts were done in the name of religion, like the Catholic Inquisition, and the Crusades, and then conclude that there is no God. He acknowledged that religious people have done some very bad things, but how do you compare 14,000 killed in the Inquisition to hundreds of millions killed by communist regimes, he said.

Dr. Isaacs next drew a line on the blackboard and described the separate realms of religion and science. “Downstairs” he said, is physics, or all sciences and the five senses, while “upstairs” is metaphysics or faith and religion. Historically, morality and ethics in societies and cultures has been developed upstairs, through religion, not downstairs.

Moral and ethical guidance comes to us in the West through the Ten Commandments, Dr. Isaacs pointed out. Without that guidance, and as those moral and ethical values breakdown, people can and do justify any kind of immoral and unethical behavior.

“If we ask the question, should we kill grandma, because she is becoming a lot of trouble and expensive to care for, science can only tell us how to kill her, not if we should kill her or not,” he said.

Scientists like Richard Dawkins, a British biologist and professor at Oxford University who wrote the bestselling book, *The God Delusion*, “are not very helpful in the area of morals and ethics,” Dr. Isaacs said. They take their resentments about religion and God downstairs, into the realm of science, but have no clear or logical explanation about how the universe came about, if not by the creation of God.

“They say the universe came into existence through random chance, like putting a bunch of monkeys together with typewriters, and waiting for them to type out the entire encyclopedia Britannica by random chance,” he said.

Although religious people have historically done some horrible things in the name of God, still, most of the progress made by humankind throughout history in culture, the arts, and even science, has been under the guidance and influence of religion, Dr. Isaacs said.

As to the question, who is right, the theists or atheists? Dr. Isaacs answered that humorously in the very beginning of his lively presentation, when he said, “God exists and is the creator and sustainer of the universe, and the atheists are wrong. Lecture over!”