

Thank you, Mercedes, for the prodigious “thought time” and excellent distillation of volumes of writings across the centuries in the attempt to help us all “think better” about our understanding the roles of faith, reason and knowledge in helping us humans make better sense of who we are and how we find meaning in our lives.

Having read your essay and tracked down many of the authors and thought leaders (e.g. I was unfamiliar with the word “patristics”) I thought it might be helpful to pull out some of the ideas that raised questions for me. Our discussion of them will be richer, informed by your research.

- 1) “A world with God and a world without God are two very different places, with very different meanings and obligations for us humans who occupy them. Bullivant and Ruse (Intro to Handbook) –
  - a. What does it mean to have a “world with God”?
  - b. What does it mean to have a “world without God”?
  - c. Perhaps we should begin by asking “who is the “God” to which Bullivant and Ruse refer?
  
- 2) “attacks against belief are in most cases launched against “the church” as a human and therefore fallible religious institution. The biblical writings are for the most part ignored or misinterpreted.”
  - a. Do most “attacks against belief” today ignore or misinterpret biblical writings?
  - b. Are there multiple ways to interpret what we in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call “biblical writings”
  
- 3) “Dawkins’ book (*The God Delusion*, 2004) contains inaccuracies and does not acknowledge important historical facts that would invalidate his own theories”
  - a. Would other members of our group agree about the “inaccuracies” that Dawkins offers? – would it help to have one or two examples?
  - b.
  
- 4) “In our secular culture, reason and science have become more important than faith and God. Belief has to survive in a culture of skepticism which gravely weakens them.”
  - a. Would members of our group agree on the meaning of “secular”, “secularism”?
  - b. Would members of our group agree on the meaning of “reason” – e.g. reason vs faith has been part of the discourse almost from the beginning
  - c. How many members of our group would agree that skepticism weakens belief?

**Commented [PN1]:** Is this a good question for discussion?

**Commented [PN2]:** Such as?

Respectfully,  
Pat Newcomb