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Atheist Calls for Truce with Christians

By Freddy Davis

There are numerous cults and religions that have been started because the founders were trying to “bring the world together” under a single religious belief. Many of these folks actually had good intentions. As they observed the religious landscape and saw the animosity that existed in the world based on religious differences, they thought to themselves, “What would it take to bring the world together?” They thought, for whatever reason, that creating a new religion would accomplish that goal. Baha’i and The Unification Church are religions that had founders who thought that way. Interestingly, creating a new religion actually does just the opposite by creating one more religion people can argue about.

Recently, someone suggested a different way to create some religious unity. Rather than simply inventing something new, his idea was to allow two different faiths to maintain their own identity, but also create an alliance where they could piggyback off each other to accomplish a common goal. In this case, the proposed alliance is between Christianity and Atheism. While an alliance between these two may seem improbable, there actually is a case that could be made under certain circumstances. And since these two faith systems are the two most strongly working against each other in modern American society, if a truce could be made, certainly it would tamp down some of the animosity that is present in society.

Jonathan Rauch is an American author, journalist, and political activist. He has previously worked at the *Winston-Salem Journal* in North Carolina, the *National Journal*, and as a freelance writer for *The Economist*. Currently he is a senior fellow in governance studies at the *Brookings Institution* and contributing editor for *The Atlantic* magazine. He is also an outspoken Atheist.

As Rauch has observed the religious landscape, it seems he came to notice that maybe there is actually something in common between his beliefs and certain Christians.

Now this commonality is not present with all Christians, mind you, but there are some who actually agree with his politics. Noticing this, he proposed that perhaps certain parties in the two groups could present a united front.

So, just who are these Christians that he believes he can work with? As it turns out, there is a certain minority segment of the self-identified Christian community that is in lockstep with secular culture regarding such things as gay marriage, abortion, transgenderism, and the like.

Seemingly, in the past, Rauch was not willing to even consider cooperating with Christians in any respect. He found the very idea of a personal God to be rather repugnant. As he grew older, however, he also began to see some of the philosophical holes in his own atheistic beliefs, and saw that certain elements of Christianity didn’t struggle with those problems. This does not, of course, mean he was giving up his Atheism, or that he believed the answers he saw in Christianity were based on anything objectively true. What he did see was a potential place where there might at least be an alliance.

While he rejects Christianity in a general sense because he doesn’t believe in God, he does see a good thing in Christianity that his atheistic beliefs lack – the idea of virtue. He senses the need for there to be some way to get at a basis for morality that can somehow be used as a solid foundation to support his Atheism.

So to get at this, he is proposing that liberal Christians and atheists combine their beliefs in a way that allows Christian virtues in to serve as a moral stabilizing factor for his atheistic beliefs while maintaining personal control of his political and social agenda. With this in mind, he came up with the idea of “Rational Liberalism.”

Rauch defines liberalism in a particular way. He sees it as expressing the belief that:

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- all human beings are free and equal,
- the people are sovereign (or at least that no one is “in charge”), and
- society is governed not by rulers but by rules.”

In defining this concept more specifically, Rouch has selected three principles that he deems to be the core elements of his liberalism:

- the rule of law,
- capitalism,
- and science.

There is really no objective reason why he has selected these three things to define his moral framework, but they are the ones he has chosen.

As he philosophically evaluates his naturalistic belief foundation, he has come to realize that it has no way to provide for any objective moral beliefs. Naturalism believes that the natural universe, operating by natural laws, is all that exists. With that as a starting point, there is no such thing as an objective moral law giver. Based on his naturalistic beliefs, morality is necessarily subjective and relative. He rightly recognizes that this is the weakness that makes it difficult for him to authoritatively assert that the moral underpinning he wants to promote (the rule of law, capitalism, and science) is true and right. This, then, is the root of his felt need to introduce a value system from the outside that could provide the ethical underpinning his core beliefs don't have.

It is at this point where he sees the values inherent in Christianity as just the right ones. Biblical Christian faith provide a belief in the objective rightness of both freedom and equality – the very values that give rise to his preferred moral foundation – the rule of law, capitalism, and science. (You can read more about Rouch's views at <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2025/06/98066/>.)

Rouch is absolutely right in his evaluation of his dilemma. The morally relativistic beliefs that define Naturalism cannot assert that any given moral point of view is objectively right. In fact, based on a naturalistic worldview, there is no such thing as objectively

right morality. Morality is necessarily defined by the person or group that has the power to impose their moral preferences on others.

And this brings us to the core of the problem. Atheism and Christianity are incompatible at the most fundamental level. They are based on two entirely different worldviews. Atheism is a belief system based on a naturalistic worldview, and Christianity is based on a theistic worldview (the belief that an objectively real God exists who has revealed to mankind right morality).

This now defines one part of Rouch's problem, but in order to understand his entire thinking, we also need to understand the beliefs of liberal Christianity. This doesn't work with biblical Christianity, only with theological liberalism. As Rouch noted, the values he wishes to use to underpin his atheistic beliefs are common specifically to those of liberal Christians. So just what do we need to know?

First, we need to note that the values that are expressed in liberal Christianity originated in biblical Christianity. Thus, those who align themselves with liberal Christianity came from a historical tradition where Christian values were inherent. Before those denominations became theologically liberal, they were traditional Christians who believed in the God of the Bible.

Over the years, however, as they began to adopt theological liberalism (higher criticism, existential theology, neo-orthodoxy, liberation theology, postmodern theology, and others), they held onto the social values of their root faith while pretty much dropping belief in the supernatural. The result in modern times is that these Christians now almost exclusively focus on social justice based on Christian values, and set aside belief in individual salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. They have a facade of belief in God, but the focus of their religion has to do with carrying out social actions, not developing a personal relationship with God.

So to pull this all together, what we have ended up with is a spiritually

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Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

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neutered Christianity that corresponds in many ways to Rouch's spiritually empty Atheism. The two points of view have very different starting points but have ended up pretty much in the same place. They both have the same basic values but for entirely different reasons.

The end result is that both sides have compromised their basic beliefs in order to get to the place they want to end up. Rouch is willing to compromise by accepting Christian values where none fit in order to provide a moral foundation to support his chosen beliefs. Liberal Christians, for their part, have shown their willing to compromise Christianity's foundational beliefs in order to promote political and social policies that don't correspond to biblical teachings. And while liberal Christians have not, to this point, agreed to any kind of formal partnership with Rouch, they have moved to Rouch's

beliefs by giving up their belief in the God of the Bible in order to support their social justice agenda.

The truth is, neither side can hold their position consistently. Atheism is not true as it is unable to deal with the part of reality that extends outside of the material world where it is possible to source objective morality. Liberal Christianity is not true because it denies the very basis for the moral values it claims to hold – belief in the God of the Bible.

In the end, liberal Christians have given up the faith they claim to have, and have converted to the kind of practical Atheism Rouch espouses. And who knows, Rouch may ultimately get the partnership he wants. It already exists as a practical matter. All that is left is for the liberal Christians to accept his overtures – and some very well may.

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