

One of World's Leading Atheists Now Believes in God, More or Less, Based on Scientific Evidence

AP Associated Press **The Associated Press**

NEW YORK Dec 9, 2004

— A British philosophy professor who has been a leading champion of atheism for more than a half-century has changed his mind. He now believes in God more or less based on scientific evidence, and says so on a video released Thursday.

At age 81, after decades of insisting belief is a mistake, Antony Flew has concluded that some sort of intelligence or first cause must have created the universe. A super-intelligence is the only good explanation for the origin of life and the complexity of nature, Flew said in a telephone interview from England.

Flew said he's best labeled a deist like Thomas Jefferson, whose God was not actively involved in people's lives.

"I'm thinking of a God very different from the God of the Christian and far and away from the God of Islam, because both are depicted as omnipotent Oriental despots, cosmic Saddam Husseins," he said. "It could be a person in the sense of a being



ADVERTISER LINK

- [Save 50% on Home Delivery of The New York Times.](#)
[As low as \\$2.40 per week.](#)
www.nyt.com

The letter commended arguments in Schroeder's "The Hidden Face of God" and "The Wonder of the World" by Varghese, an Eastern Rite Catholic layman.

This week, Flew finished writing the first formal account of his new outlook for the introduction to a new edition of his "God and Philosophy," scheduled for release next year by Prometheus Press.

Prometheus specializes in skeptical thought, but if his belief upsets people, well "that's too bad," Flew said. "My whole life has been guided by the principle of Plato's Socrates: Follow the evidence, wherever it leads."

Last week, Richard Carrier, a writer and Columbia University graduate student, posted new material based on correspondence with Flew on the atheistic www.infidels.org Web page. Carrier assured atheists that Flew accepts only a "minimal God" and believes in no afterlife.

Flew's "name and stature are big. Whenever you hear people talk about atheists, Flew always comes up," Carrier said. Still, when it comes to Flew's reversal, "apart from curiosity, I don't think it's like a big deal."

Flew told The Associated Press his current ideas have some similarity with American "intelligent design" theorists, who see evidence for a guiding force in the construction of the universe. He accepts Darwinian evolution but doubts it can explain the ultimate origins of life.

A Methodist minister's son, Flew became an atheist at 15.

Early in his career, he argued that no conceivable events could constitute proof against God for believers, so skeptics were right to wonder whether the concept of God meant anything at all.

Another landmark was his 1984 "The Presumption of Atheism," playing off the presumption of innocence in criminal law. Flew said the debate over God must begin by presuming atheism, putting the burden of proof on those arguing that God exists.

On the Net:

Varghese page:

Infidels on Flew:

Copyright 2005 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

- [Print This Story](#)[Print This Story](#)
- [E-mail This Article](#)[Email This Article](#)
-  [RSS Headlines](#)
-  [Newsletters](#)

MORE HEADLINES

- [Aruba Police Question Detained Teen's Dad](#)
- [Church Adopts Sex Abuse Reporting Changes](#)
- [Mom Demands Recall of Daughter's School Yearbook](#)

Most Sent Headlines

- [Why Is the Best Sunscreen Blocked by FDA?](#)
- [Kidnapping Surge Adds to Terror in Haiti](#)
- [Does a New Pill Contain the Fountain of Youth?](#)
- [More Most Sent Headlines](#)