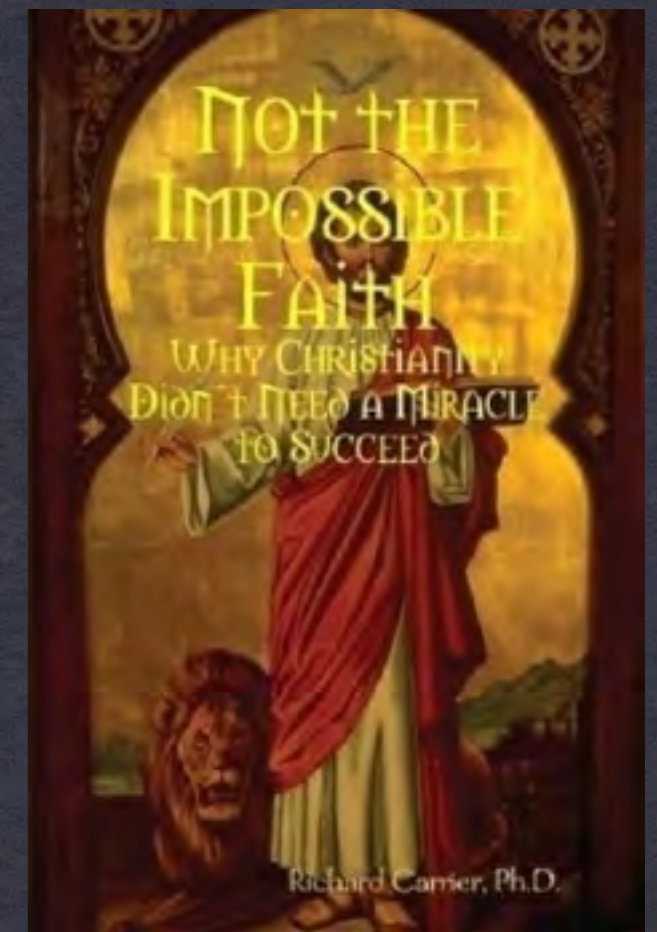


**Richard Carrier, Ph.D.**  
[www.richardcarrier.info](http://www.richardcarrier.info)



**Atheism...**  
**Plus What?**

# Atheism Is Now a Community

- “New Atheism” / identity movement
- “Atheists” recognized as a constituency in the media
- Numerous national, regional, local organizations
- Conferences, meetups and social societies
- We have our own periodicals & online networks

# Communities Have Responsibilities

- They have a voice (*will they use it responsibly?*)
- They have resources (*will they use them responsibly?*)
  - ▶ *Including information networks & action networks*
- They will be judged (*will they ensure it's accurately?*)
- They can influence their own members (*for the better?*)

# Our Community Has Goals

- To increase the number of atheists
  - ▶ **Hopefully, *morally responsible atheists***
- To protect the rights of atheists
  - ▶ **And not just by enforcing church-state separation**
- To serve the needs of atheists
  - ▶ **Including *knowledge interests and social needs***



What my super religious mother got me for Christmas... (Limgur.com)

submitted 2 days ago by Lunam [ ]  
1819 comments share source save hide report spam hide all child comments

NORWEGIAN SHOP

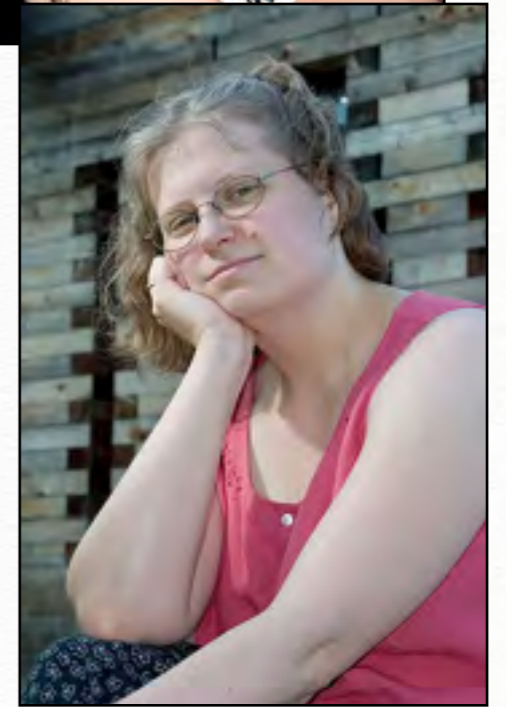
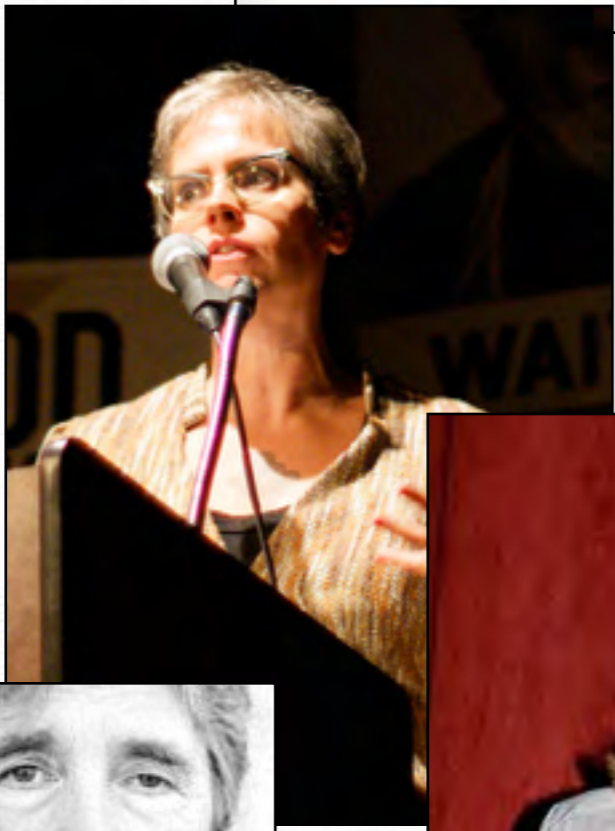
# skepchick

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## Mom, Don't Read This

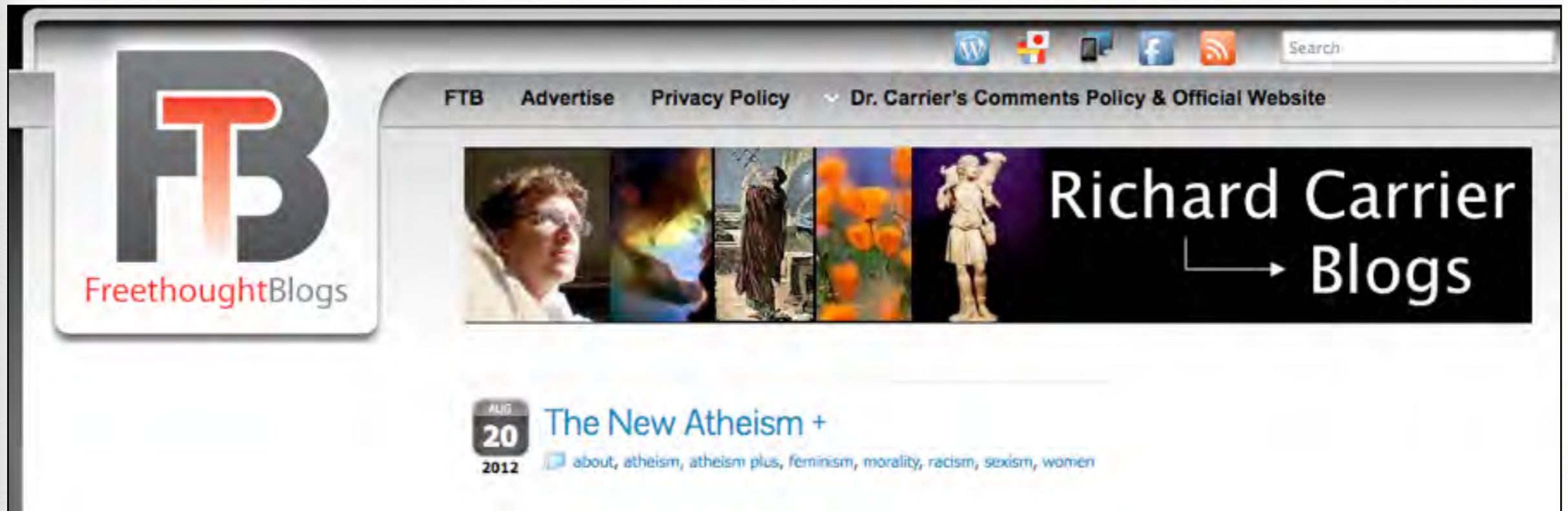
Rebecca Watson / September 29, 2011



**Atheism Plus...**

**Basic Moral Values**





# Hitler

- Stridently denounced all this sexual harassment.

# Stalin

- Argued for greater humanitarian concern from atheists.

- Advocated we adopt just three basic moral values...

- ▶ Compassion
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Reasonableness

# “starting a religious cult”

# Things That Do **Not** Make You Hitler, Stalin, a Cultist, or a Religionist

- Calling men who engage in overt sexual harassment douchebags and assholes.
- Arguing for greater humanitarian concern from atheists.
- Asking people to be compassionate, honest, and reasonable.
- Disowning people who declare their *refusal* to be compassionate, honest, or reasonable.

# Atheism+ as a Thing

- Term first promoted by Jennifer McCreight
- To describe a movement that had been growing within New Atheism over the last five years
- For promoting moral values and the discussion of societal problems among atheists
- And for making the atheist community more welcoming of, and responsive to, women and minorities

# Not Just Atheists, But Atheists *Plus* All This

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# Not Just Atheists, But Atheists *Plus* All This

**Its basic values (and the reason for its moniker) Jen stated thus:**

“ We are...

Atheists *plus* we care about social justice,

Atheists *plus* we support women's rights,

Atheists *plus* we protest racism,

Atheists *plus* we fight homophobia and transphobia,

Atheists *plus* we use critical thinking and skepticism.

**( these are just what should  
be the clear and obvious  
no-brainers )**

Atheism

+

Humanism

+

Skepticism

Atheism

An Outspoken  
Atheist Identity  
Movement

...adopting Some  
of the Moral and  
Social Goals of  
Humanism

+

Humanism

...and the Critical  
Commitments and  
Interests of  
Modern  
Skepticism

+

Skepticism

# Already a Thing

- Atheism+ as just described is already a growing and active movement within New Atheism overall (*someone just gave it a name*).
- Not everyone furthering its goals adopts the specific label of "Atheism+" (*nor need they*).
- Institutions can pursue their own narrower goals while still embracing Atheism+ as a laudable set of goals within the wider atheist community they serve.



# Communities Have Responsibilities

- (1) Christians claim atheists have no morals. Do you disagree? *Then stand up for and act on your values.*
- (2) Let's use our resources to make the atheist community **better informed** and **more active** on social issues, and not just in science, philosophy, and religion.
- (3) Let's accept and encourage constructive criticism of each other within the movement and use it to better ourselves and the community and its institutions.

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Don't Let Bad Atheists  
Represent You, Nor Let Them  
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# Commun

Show the World That the Atheist Community Is Not Tone Deaf to Major Issues in the World

Don't Let Bad Atheists Represent You, Nor Let Them Think They Do by Your Silence

Heed the Difference Between Harassment or Verbal Abuse and Criticism

- disagree? *The stand up for*
- (2) Let's use our resources to make the community **better informed** and **more** active, not just in science, philosophy, and religion.
  - (3) Let's accept and encourage constructive criticism of each other within the movement and use it to better ourselves and the community and its institutions.

# Our Community Has Goals

- To increase the number of atheists
  - ▶ *Preferably, morally responsible atheists*
- To protect the rights of atheists
  - ▶ **Including the right to be free of harassment (online & off)**
- To serve the needs of atheists
  - ▶ **Including *knowledge interests and social needs***

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Atheist Organizations Need to Focus a Bit More on This

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# Our Community Has Goals

Atheist Organizations Already  
Do This Very Well

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# Our Community Has Goals

Atheist Organizations Already Do This Very Well

But They Might Not Be Doing This Quite As Well

▶ Preferably, *morally* re

- To protect the rights of atheists
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  - ▶ Including *knowledge interests and social needs*

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# Our Community Has Goals

What Are We Doing to Make the Atheist Community Better Informed about the Problems of the World?

number of atheists

*responsible atheists*

rights of atheists

**to be free of harassment**

- To serve the needs of atheists

- ▶ **Including *knowledge interests and social needs***

# Our Community Has Goals

What Are We Doing to Make the Atheist Community Better Informed about the Problems of the World?

What Are We Doing to Meet the Social Needs of Atheists?  
(Like SIGs and Fun Stuff)

- To serve the needs of atheists

▶ Including *knowledge interests* and *social needs*

# That First Goal...

- To increase the number of atheists
  - ▶ **focus on education in science, reason, skepticism**
  - ▶ **broaden appeal to women and minorities**
  - ▶ **give them leadership roles, be responsive to their concerns, and treat them well when they show up**

# That First Goal...

FOR EXAMPLE: You want more black atheists in your membership? Then show you actually care about their concerns, e.g. **inner city poverty** and **prison reform**.

- ▶ **broaden appeal to women and minorities**
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# That First Goal...

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**Actually ask women and minorities (*a lot of them, not just a few*) what would get them to attend your events, become members of your organization, and financially support it. Take their answers seriously.**



BONUS EXAMPLE: If education is a major factor in making more atheists, and making more atheists is your goal, then shouldn't the disparity in education between white and black neighborhoods be of great concern?

FOR EXAMPLE: You want more black atheists in your membership? Then show you actually care about their concerns, e.g. **inner city poverty** and **prison reform**.

**Actually ask women and minorities (*a lot of them, not just a few*) what would get them to attend your events, become members of your organization, and financially support it. Take their answers seriously.**

- **Are we, as a community, going to care about stuff?**
- **...like sexism, deception, poverty, crime, corruption, injustice?**

- Social / political activism at the institutional level is unnecessary (*orgs have their own missions*)
- But atheist organizations can at least...
  - ▶ **help encourage your members to get more informed & involved in such issues generally (i.e. *promote morally responsible atheism as a general ideal*)**
  - ▶ **facilitate members' access to reliable information & discussion about these issues**
  - ▶ **sponsor talks from atheist experts in these issues at atheist conferences and meetups**
  - ▶ **occasionally co-sponsor charitable and educational actions in these issues (*and be visible doing so*)**
  - ▶ **support SIGs (*in local chapters or national online forums*)**

# For Example...

- All atheist organizations should publicly and officially denounce the harassment of prominent atheist women.
  - ▶ **This does require really getting informed about what has been going on** (*don't trust any single informant, go to the source, and know many specific examples of what actually happened*).
- Call for all atheists to speak out against, and socially punish (i.e., denounce, downvote, etc.), any harassment behavior wherever and whenever possible.
- We have to make it socially expensive and uncomfortable for harassers to continue their harassment.

# And That's Just for Example...

- Doing things like that will make your organization more attractive to atheist women, and more responsive to their needs and concerns, and thus will attract more women.
- It will also confirm your moral values to the public and thus better represent atheism as a community.

# And That's Just for Example...

- Ditto for every other issue...
- ***Because this is not the only thing atheist women want to talk about or see action on*** (e.g. What about child care at conferences and meetups? What about correcting misinformation about feminism among atheist men and women? )
- ***...and women aren't the only neglected group:*** How are you serving the disabled? The blind? The deaf? What do Hispanic or black or Philippino atheists want to discuss with the wider atheist community? What issues might they want to get the atheist community to help them with?

# **Atheist Organizations**

**Take Note:**

**This Will Grow Your  
Membership and  
Financial Support**

**You Could Be  
Appealing to  
Them**



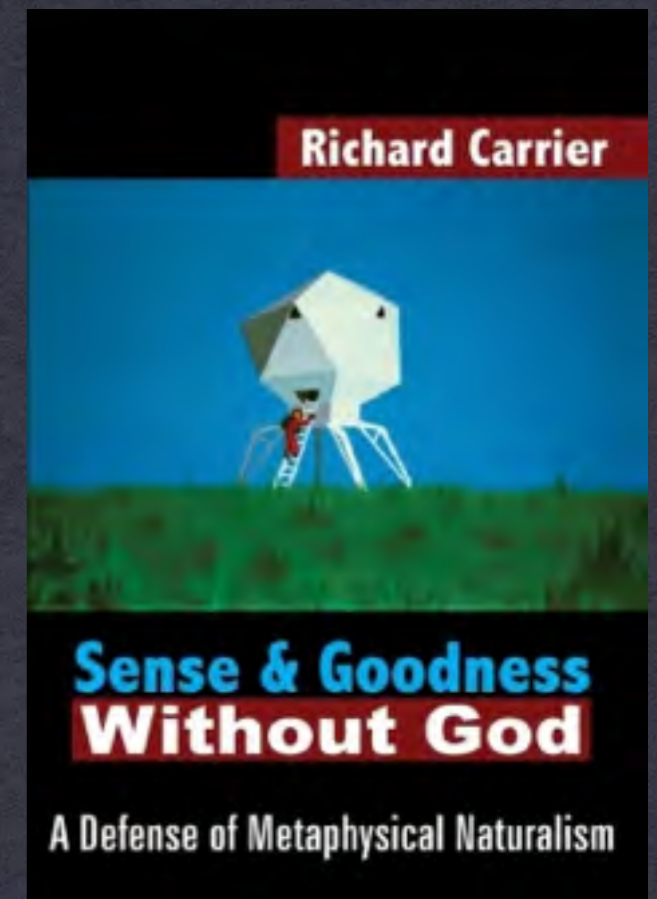
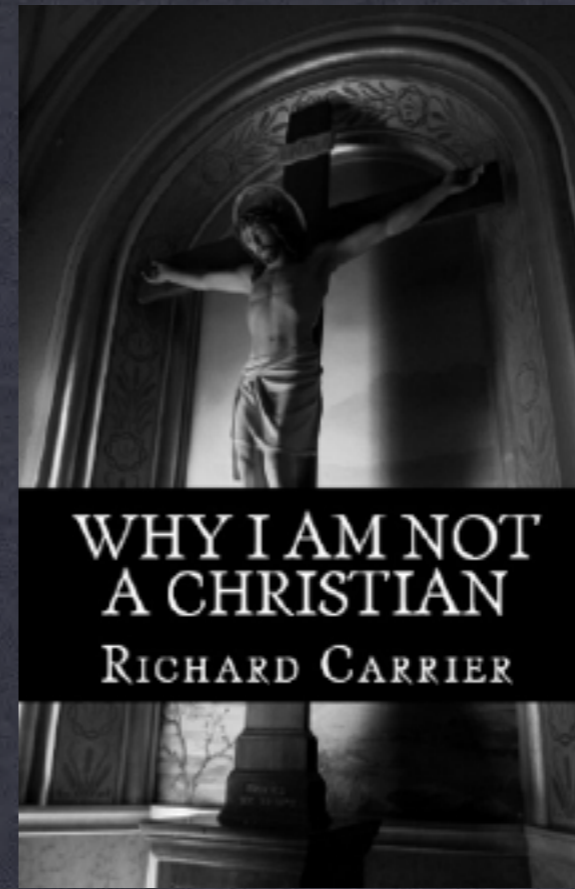
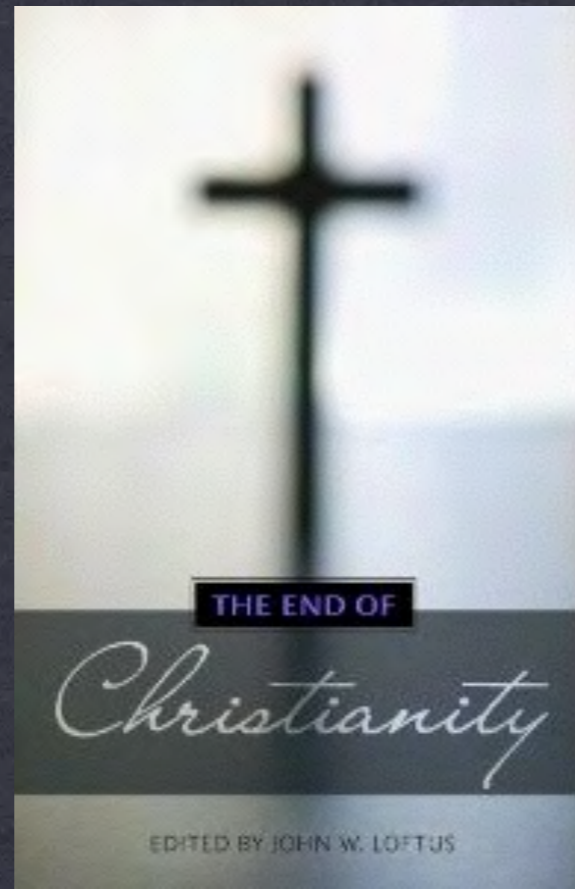
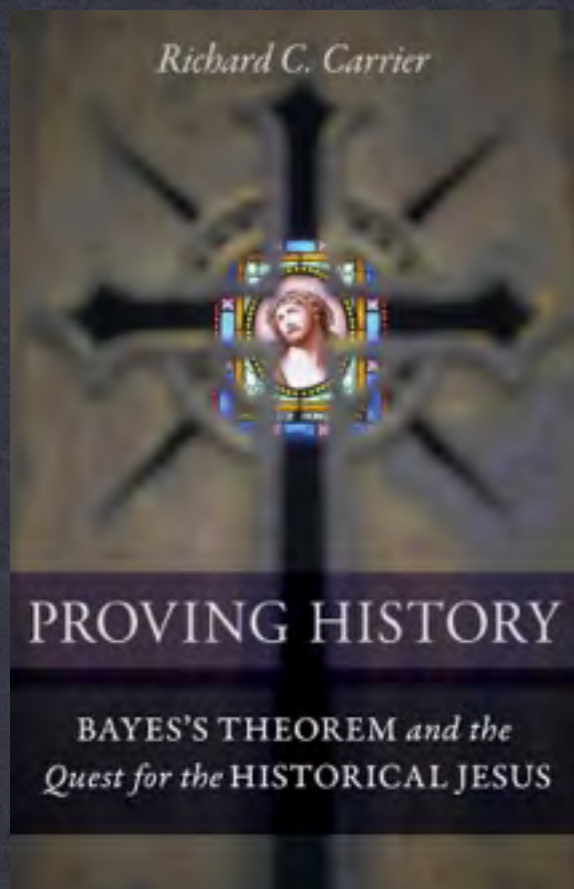
Atheism

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Humanism

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Skepticism



**Richard Carrier, Ph.D.**  
[www.richardcarrier.info](http://www.richardcarrier.info)

