



The **Myth** of Atheism

Recap

Mental assent

“I do **believe**, but help me overcome my **unbelief!**” Mark 9:24b

Changed behaviour

Recap

Misalignment

Sacred Document

Exclusivity

Recap

End is Nigh

At that **time** many will **turn away** from the faith and will betray and **hate** each other, and many **false prophets** will appear and **deceive** many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow **cold**, [Matthew 24:10-12](#)

For the **time** will come when people will not put up with **sound doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of **teachers** to say what their **itching ears** want to hear. [2 Timothy 4:3](#)

What do you believe?

Why do you believe?

How do you believe?

More Canadians than ever have no religious affiliation, census shows, CBC, 2022

Canadians are losing their religion at an **unprecedented** rate, with more than a **third of the country** reporting no religious affiliation in the latest census, Statistics Canada revealed

"It is fair to say that the two things that we are seeing — the growth in the non-religious population, along with the decline in people reporting Christian denominations — they're **linked**," said Jarod Dobson, a senior analyst with StatCan's diversity and socio-cultural statistics division.

Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Waterloo, said the shift away from religion is largely a **generational** one. Only 19 per cent of Canadians 65 and older said they had no religion, the census data shows, compared to 36.5 per cent of those between the ages of 15 and 64, and 42.5 per cent of those 14 and younger.

No idea grows in a **vacuum**

“It is our **preference** that decides against Christianity,
not **arguments.**” Friedrich Nietzsche (1844—1900)

Only fools say in their hearts, “There is **no** God.” Psalms 14:1

Definition and Origins

Atheism is the **disbelief** in the existence of God and other deities. It is commonly defined as the positive denial of **theism** (ie. the assertion that deities do not exist), or the deliberate rejection of theism (i.e., the refusal to believe in the existence of deities). Many self-described atheists share common **skeptical concerns** regarding empirical evidence for spiritual or supernatural claims. [McGill University](#)

Definition and Origins

Atheism can be traced back to the **ancient Greeks**, particularly to **Diagoras of Melos**, a 5th Century B.C. poet and sophist. Although Diagoras of Melos never wrote about atheism, it has been **widely recognized** that he was publicly very candid of his views and was well-known to demystify the Eleusinian secret religion, in order to provoke his contemporaries into thought

The present book evaluates Diagoras' biography and shows that he **cannot** be considered to have been an **atheist** in the modern sense. **Diagoras of Melos, Marek Winiarczyk 2016**

Definition and Origins

‘Atheism’ or the word ‘atheist’, was first used in the English language in the **16th Century**, it derived from the French ‘athéisme’, which came from the Greek, ‘a’ meaning without and ‘theos’ meaning ‘God’.

Definition and Origins

the key period for atheist thinking came during the **Age of Enlightenment**.

The nature of the Enlightenment period, made it possible for intellectuals and philosophers to be forthright with their arguments, with the growing examination of religious orthodoxy. Key to the atheism movement during the Enlightenment was philosopher **Baron d'Holbach** (1723–1789), whose salon was renowned for being the popular haunt of the philosophers of the age, with revolutionary ideas on the existence of God. One of d'Holbach's best known works, '**Systeme de la Nature**' published in 1770, has been described by some as the "**bible of atheism**". *Systeme de la Nature*, openly denies the existence of God and attributes such beliefs as the product of fear and a lack of understanding, ground-breaking for its time.

Definition and Origins

“What, indeed, is an **atheist**? He is one who destroys **delusions** which are harmful to humanity in order to lead men back to nature, to reality, to reason. He is a thinker who, having reflected on the nature of matter, its energy, properties and ways of acting, has no need of idealized powers or imaginary intelligences to explain the phenomena of the universe and the operations of nature.” **Baron d’Holbach, ‘Système de la Nature’**

Definition and Origins

The **New Atheists** are authors of early twenty-first century books promoting atheism. These authors include Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens.

It was born in the aftermath of **9/11**, when belief in a deity seemed to some people a newly urgent danger to western civilization.

In spite of their different approaches and occupations (only Dennett is a professional philosopher), the New Atheists tend to share a general set of assumptions and viewpoints. These positions constitute the background **theoretical framework** that is known as the New Atheism.

Definition and Origins

The framework has a **metaphysical** component, an **epistemological** component, and an **ethical** component. Regarding the metaphysical component, the New Atheist authors share the central belief that there is **no supernatural or divine reality** of any kind. The epistemological component is their common claim that **religious belief is irrational**. The moral component is the assumption that there is a universal and **objective secular moral standard**. This moral component sets them apart from other prominent historical atheists such as Nietzsche and Sartre, and it plays a pivotal role in their arguments because it is used to conclude that religion is bad in various ways, although Dennett is more reserved than the other three.

Humanity doesn't need God to be good

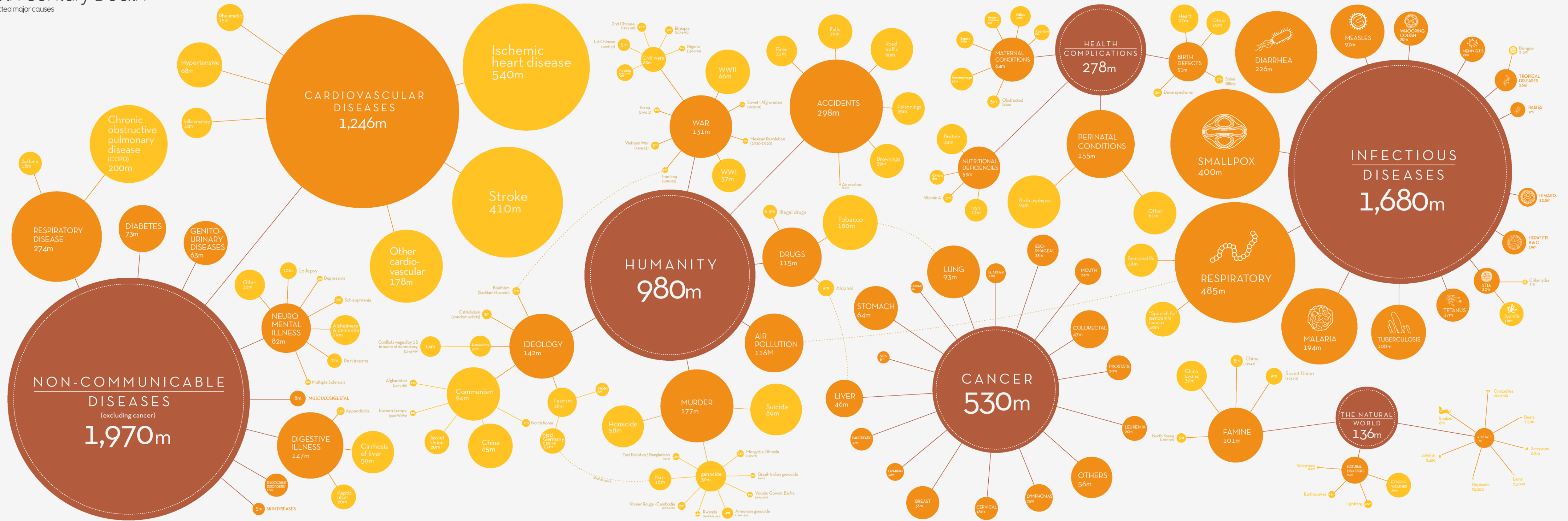
Religion leads to violence, hate and war

Atheism is rational

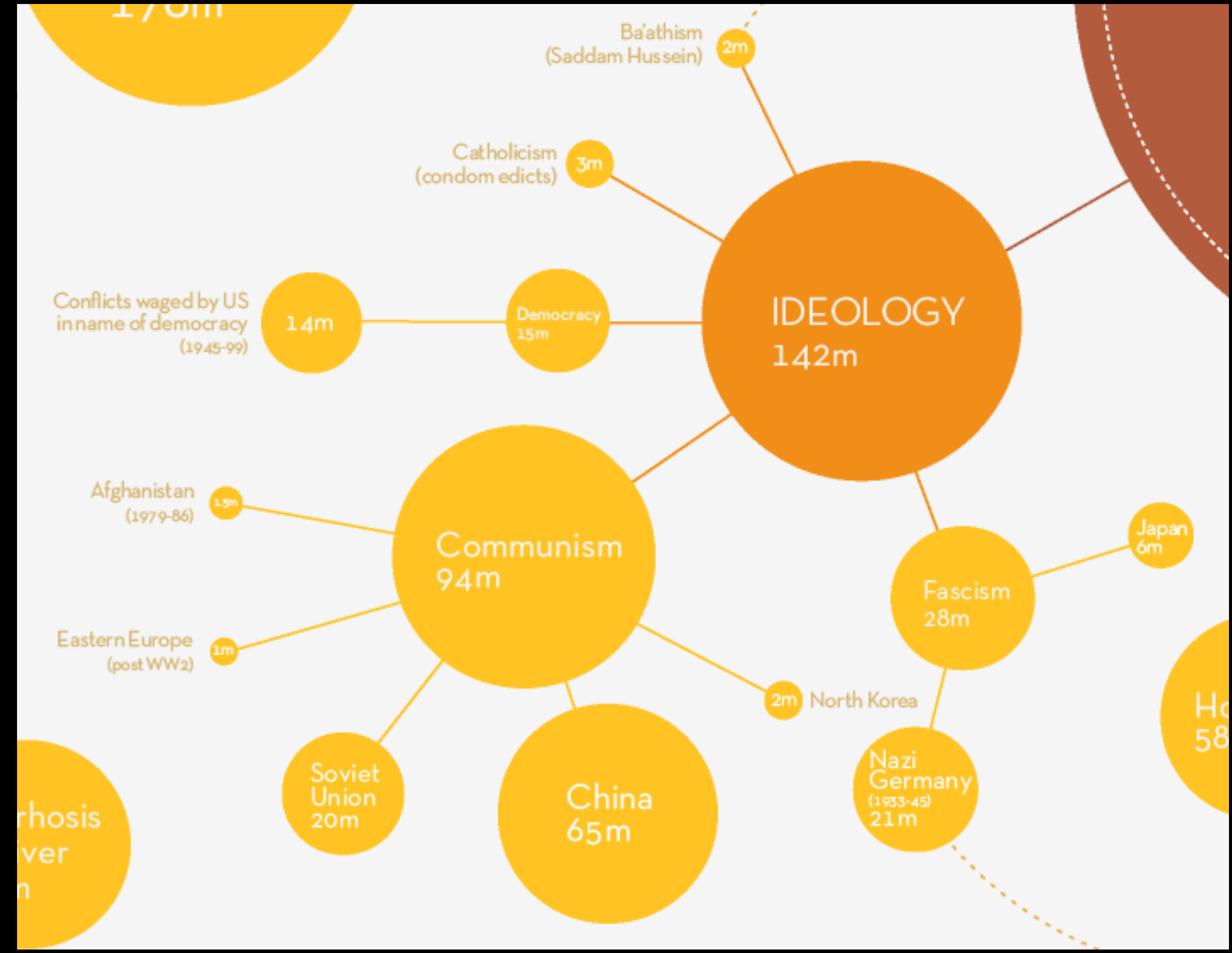
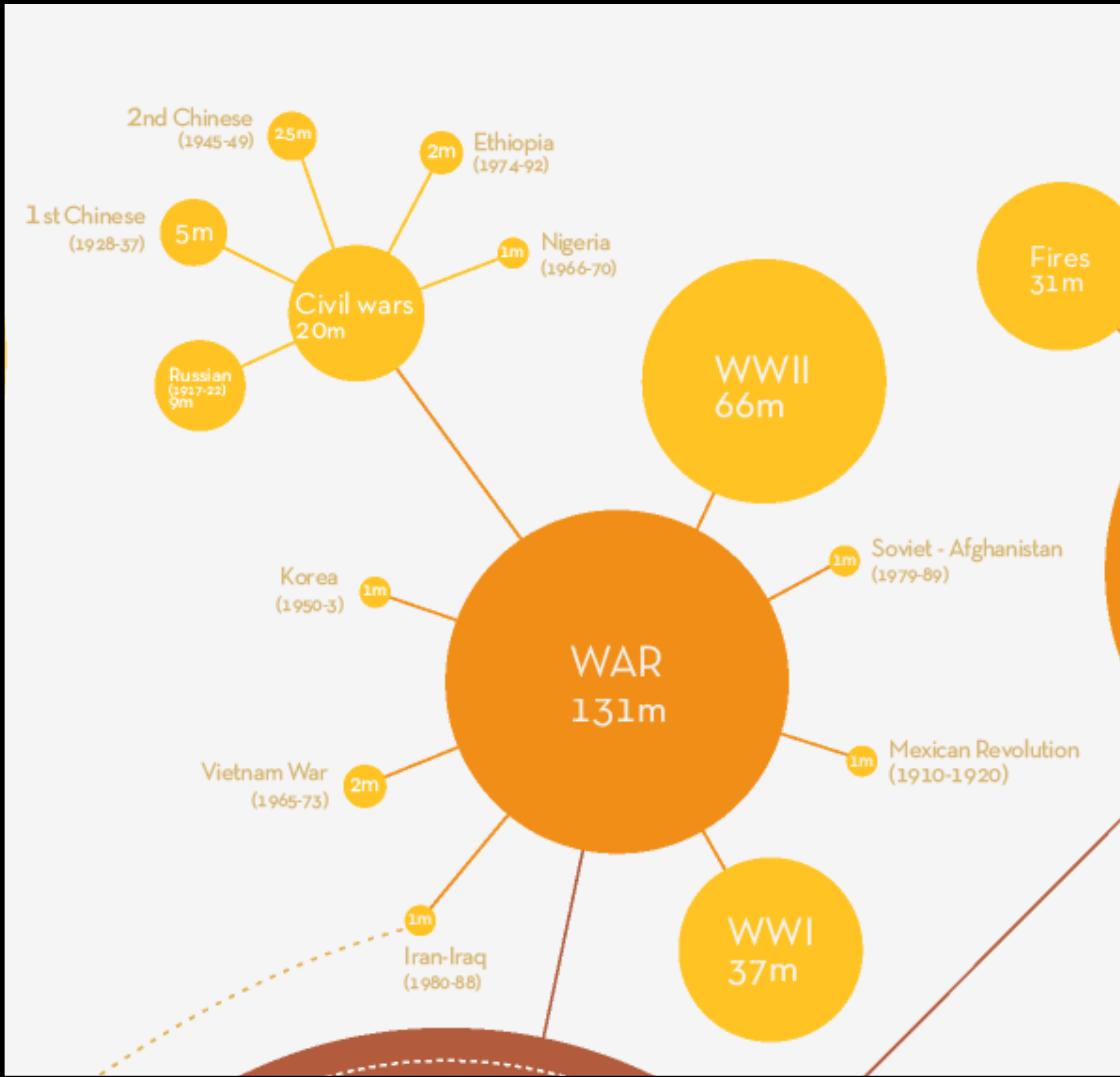
Reality on realities **terms**

20th Century Death

20th Century Death
selected major causes



WHO Mortality report (PDF) & app, WHO Global Burden of Disease (PDF), OECD Mortality Stats



Countries	Human rights and rule of law index, 2022	Global rank	Available data
Yemen, Islam 99%	9.9	1	2007 - 2022
Iran, Islam 99%	9.8	2	2007 - 2022
China, Secular N/A	9.7	3	2007 - 2022
Egypt, Islam 90%	9.5	4	2007 - 2022
C.A. Republic, 72% Christian	9.4	5	2007 - 2022
Syria, 87% Islam	9.4	6	2007 - 2022
DR Congo, 89.8% Christian	9.3	7	2007 - 2022
North Korea, Secular N/A	9.3	8	2007 - 2022
Burma, 82.4% Buddhist	9.2	9	2007 - 2022
Sudan, 68% Islam	9.1	10	2007 - 2022
Eritrea, 55% Islam	9	11	2007 - 2022
Russia, Secular N/A	9	12	2007 - 2022

Does Faith Matter?, World Economic Forum

The survey was taken by members of the Network of the Global Agenda Councils over a 10-month period, and concerned their views on the role of faith.

Here are **five areas** where faith can make a difference:

Human rights

Peacemaking and conflict prevention

Values

Anti-corruption

Business ethics

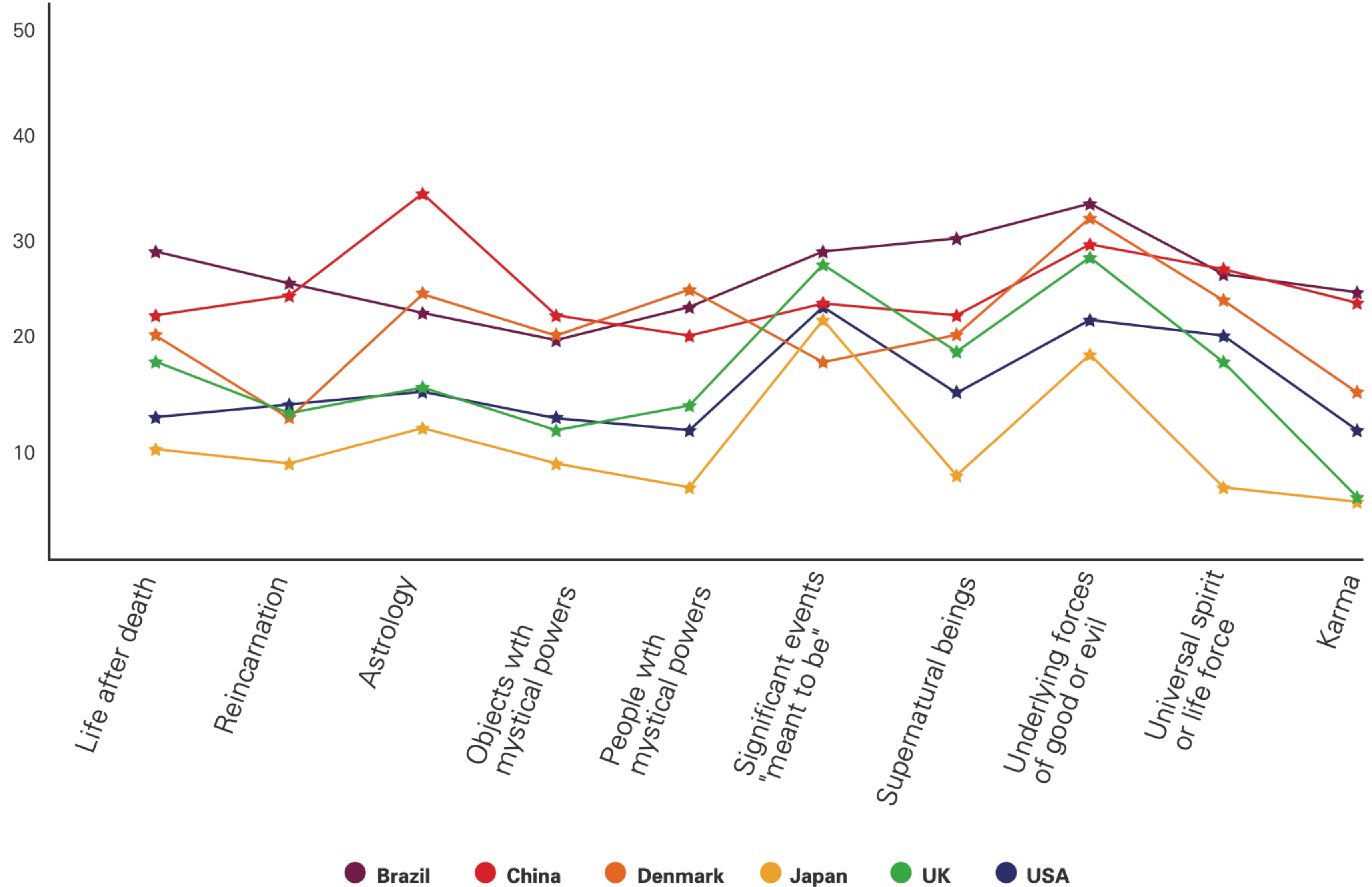
Atheists still believe in the supernatural, new report finds, Big Think, 2019

A new report indicates **atheists** and agnostics **still believe in supernatural phenomena** despite not believing in gods. They tend to hold these beliefs at lower rates than the general population. This is in line with previous studies that show non-believers are just as prone to irrational thinking as their religious counterparts.

the U.K.-based Understanding Unbelief Project has released the Understanding Unbelief white sheet. A study of “unbelievers” in six countries on four continents, the report covers topics such as how confident people are in their beliefs compared to theists in the same country, how they choose to identify themselves, and what they value.

Understanding Unbelief White Sheet

i) Atheists



While ‘belief’ and ‘unbelief’ are normally used in relation to God (or gods), there are many other supernatural beings and phenomena that **substantial percentages** of the general population believe to exist. Logically, unbelief in God need not entail unbelief in these other things. Accordingly, our survey probed the extent to which unbelievers agree that various supernatural phenomena either exist (e.g., ‘objects with mystical powers to heal or harm’) or are true (e.g., astrology).

As can be seen above, in none of our six countries surveyed does the percentage of unbelievers who qualify as naturalists approach 50%. Even among American atheists, the most naturalistic group across our surveyed countries, only a third seem to have a **wholly naturalistic** world view.

Among Chinese atheists meanwhile, fewer than one in ten does.

Humans 'predisposed' to believe in gods and the afterlife, University of Oxford

A three-year international research project, directed by two academics at the University of Oxford, finds that humans have **natural tendencies** to believe in gods and an afterlife.

The £1.9 million project involved **57 researchers** who conducted over **40 separate studies** in **20 countries** representing a diverse range of cultures. The studies (both analytical and empirical) conclude that humans are **predisposed** to believe in gods and an afterlife,

Humans 'predisposed' to believe in gods and the afterlife, University of Oxford

The researchers point out that the project was not setting out to prove the existence of god or otherwise, but sought to find out whether concepts such as gods and an afterlife appear to be entirely **taught** or **basic expressions** of **human nature**.

'The Cognition, Religion and Theology Project' led by Dr Justin Barrett, from the Centre for Anthropology and Mind at Oxford University, drew on research from a range of disciplines, including **anthropology, psychology, philosophy, and theology**. They directed an international body of researchers conducting studies in 20 different countries that represented both traditionally **religious** and **atheist** societies.

“If you contemplate God long enough,” he writes in *How God Changes Your Brain*, “something surprising happens in the **brain**. Neural functioning begins to change. Different circuits become activated, while others become deactivated. New dendrites are formed, new synaptic connections are made, and the brain becomes **more sensitive** to **subtle realms** of experience. Perceptions alter, beliefs begin to change, and if God has meaning for you, then God becomes neurologically real.” [Andrew Newberg](#)

Dr. Andrew Newberg is the director of research at the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health and a physician at Jefferson University Hospital. He is board certified in internal medicine and nuclear medicine.

“The result is not, as we once imagined, a **secular** society. It is a **pagan society**, and its paganism, having been born out of the rejection of Christianity, is far more **resistant to the gospel** than the pre-Christian paganism with which cross-cultural missions have been familiar. Here, surely, is the most challenging missionary frontier of our time.” **Leslie Newbigin**

“If **atheism** solved all human woe, then the Soviet Union would have been an empire of joy and dancing bunnies, instead of the land of **corpses**.” **John C Wright**

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very **religious**. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an **unknown god**. So you are **ignorant** of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. [Acts 17:22-23](#)



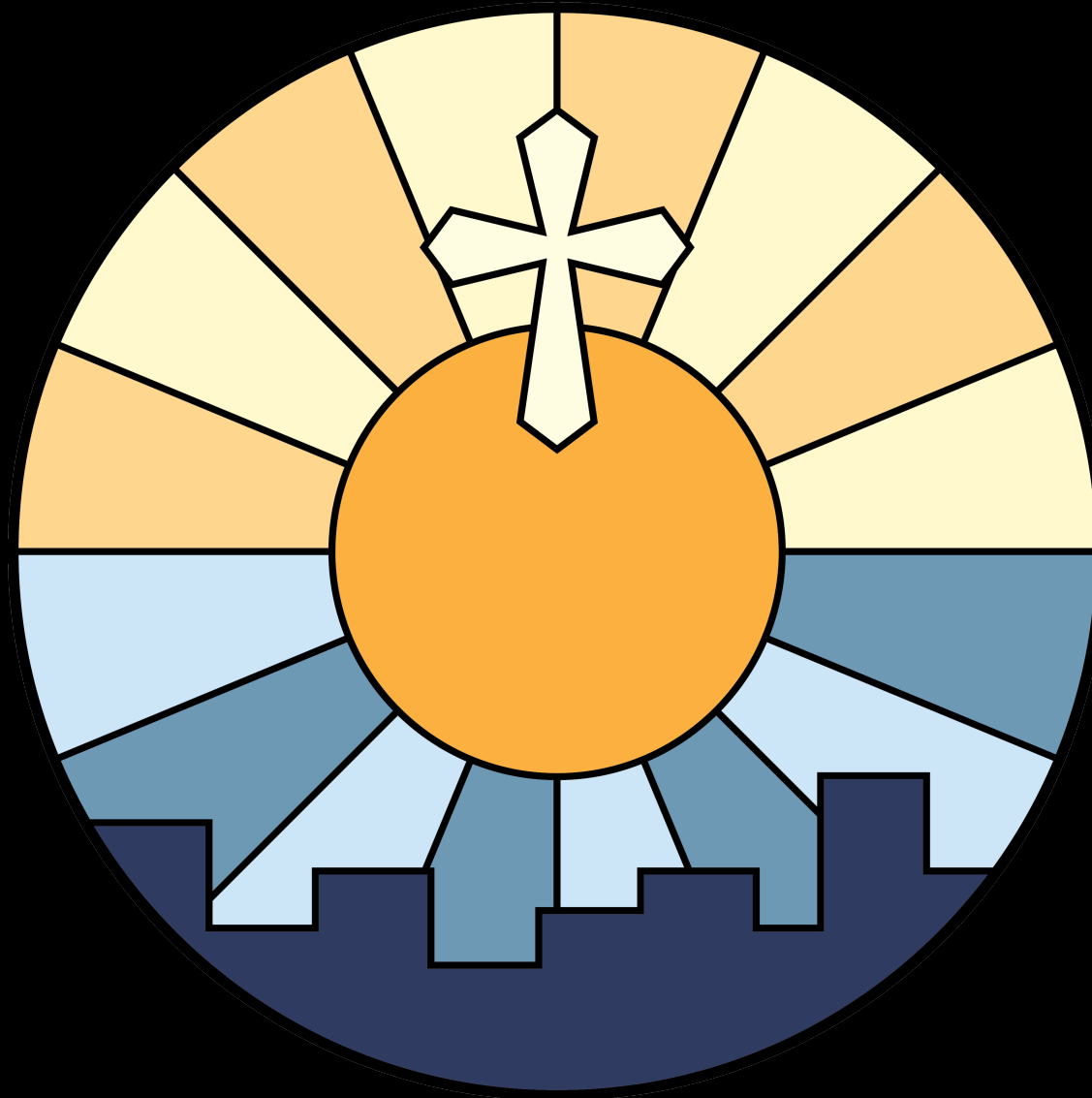
Coldest Night of the Year
Saturday February 25th

“Frosted Flakes”



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