

1/2004

Re: God's Morality

Editors,

Some of us are not so sure of the connection between belief in God and human morality as others (Robert Williamson , Register Guard, Letters to the Editor, Jan 12, 2004). Personally, I don't know if God is alive, dead, asleep or just non-existent. However, if God does indeed exist, it would appear that she has a rather hands-off management style. In any case, if belief in God and morality really do go hand in hand, then we might expect our prisons to be filled with atheists. But numerous studies by researchers and the Bureau of Prisons indicate that the vast majority of incarcerated criminals have strong beliefs in the Almighty. Could it be that these "runaway judges" are preferentially sentencing religious believers to jail?

Perhaps it is more reasonable to consider the idea that morality is a somewhat fallible and very human process by which individuals participating in a society, both tacitly and verbally agree to interact and cooperate with one another for their own and mutual benefit. Perhaps codes of moral conduct, social taboos, civil laws, family traditions, rules of etiquette and yes, even religious laws, are all reasonable efforts by humans to find different ways to simply get along and share in the tangible benefits of a competitive yet cooperative society. That is to say, a society of people that individually all struggle with a personal balance between selfish instinct and altruistic behavior.

On the other hand, if belief in God is the only thing that keeps you from committing murder and larceny, then please, by all means, continue with your beliefs.

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