Written by Administrator Wednesday, 24 July 2013 06:51 -

"Atheism, not god, is odd" says *New Scientist* 6 March 2010, p3 &p 26-27. Recently militant atheists such as Richard Dawkins have been loudly condemning religion as "self-indulgent, thought-denying skyhookery" and reviving the old enlightenment claim that as people become more educated they turn away from religious beliefs. This would appear to be true from the results of a survey of university students in the UK. In 2007 a survey of 728 students revealed 48.9 per cent claimed not to believe in any god, and 49.6 per cent claiming no religious affiliation. The Oxford University sample had the highest rate of atheism: 57.3 per cent.

Richard Dawkins, who was an Oxford Professor prior to his recent retirement, would be pleased. However, surveys of the general public indicate the education and religion are not such opposites. For example: a 2008 British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey by David Voas of the University of Manchester revealed 25 per cent of white British men aged between 25 and 34 claiming "no religion" have degrees, whereas around 40 per cent of those describing themselves as religious had degrees. The overall trend is the same for women. According to *Ne w Scientist*

, "The picture is more complicated across different ethnic groups, although the overall trend remains the same."

This apparent contradiction has confounded social scientists so much they have now decided they should study atheism in the same way religion has been studied. In 2008 an international and interdisciplinary organisation named the "Non-religion and Secularity Research Network" was set up to study godlessness. The *New Scientist* editorial summarises the apparent problem: "If you're one of those committed atheists in the Richard Dawkins mould who dreams of ridding the world of religious mumbo-jumbo, prepare yourself for a disappointment: there is no good evidence that education leads to secularisation. In fact, the more we learn about the 'god instinct' and the refusal of religion to fade away under the onslaught of progress, the more the non-religious mindset looks like the odd man out."

Editorial Comment: The high percentage of students claiming to be atheists is probably because humanists and atheist have driven agenda in the academic world for decades, and made all mention of God in public life unacceptable. Furthermore, high profile atheists like Richard Dawkins have heaped vitriolic insults on Christians and, unless they have really strong convictions, many undergraduate students do not have the confidence to stand out against the accepted world view.

What New Scientist calls the "god instinct" is the knowledge that exists in all people that they

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are made in the image of God, and can see the evidence of His work in the creation, which the Apostle Paul refers to in Romans 1:18-25. Some people deliberately deny, and delude themselves they are not accountable to their Creator, and therefore worship themselves or the earth. Their time is coming! (Ref. sceptics, humanism, scoffers)

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