



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on April 12, 2011

Do Religious People Live Longer?

Elissaios Papyrakis at the University of East Anglia has come out with a report that suggests that fewer and fewer young people are attending church, while the longer people live, the greater the drop in the percentage of those who call themselves religious. According to the data Papyrakis used, which was collected from the World Value Survey Dataset and the World Bank, each extra 10 years of life expectancy correlated to an 8.4 percent drop in religious belief.



The study did not include other factors, such as a potential genetic predisposition toward God — a theory proposed by [Professor Robert Rowthorn](#) of King's College at Cambridge. The professor calculated that 40 percent of a person's inclination to believe in God is genetic. He also noted that there is a "fertility gap" between the religious and the irreligious: "The more devout people are, the more children they are likely to have. Sections such as the Amish, the Hutterites and Haredi [ultra-orthodox] Jews have total fertility rates three to four times the secular average." Dr. Rowthorn commented that if these rates hold constant, then very religious people will one day be a majority, although some children of these parents will become secular. He added: "Provided a core of high-fertility sects continues to exist, they will transform the genetic composition of the society through either internal growth or defection...There will be an increasing number of people with a genetic predisposition towards religion but who lead secular lives." He hints, also, that this could increase the percentage of the population with a predisposition toward "authority and conservatism."

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Rowthorn and Papyrakis seem to view religion as a sort of deviant behavior. Papyrakis even engages in



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a “cost-benefit analysis” to explain why so many people in Britain have stopped attending church and do not believe in God. The science news website LiveScience also reports a study last year by Christopher Scheitle at Penn State University indicating that, contrary to previous assumptions, religion may not be good for one’s health. “Previous research showed some association between belonging to a religious group and positive health outcomes,” Scheitle commented, adding, “We became interested in what would happen to your health if you left a religious group.”

What can be made of these “scientific” studies of religion in life? Does the University of East Anglia ring a bell at all? That institution was at the very heart of [Climategate](#) in 2009 — when thousands of emails and other documents from the university’s Climate Research Unit were made public, revealing that the university’s scientists had withheld information or manipulated the data in an attempt to make a case for manmade global warming.

Also, just last month, Penn State University engaged in what might be considered a Keystone (State) Cops investigation of the apparent corrupting of data by that university regarding Climategate. University officials interviewed Dr. Michael Mann, alleged to be the principal advocate of hiding the data that show a decline in temperature globally, and simply asked him if he tried to hide or delete emails or data. He responded to only one of the questions, and the investigators never spoke with Eugene Wahl, Mann’s colleague, who could have exposed the deceptiveness of Mann’s answer. The university found that it had behaved properly, so “case closed.” Dr. Mann continues to receive federal grant funds.

A hint of what is happening in academia comes when the University of East Anglia’s Papyrakis gets outside his “research” itself and engages in recommendations: “In light of rising life expectancy, it is important to emphasize the socioeconomic and spiritual benefits...for example, expanding a person’s social circle, communal activities, spiritual fulfillment, support and guidance, rather than uncertain rewards in the afterlife. These benefits can counterbalance the negative impact of life expectancy on religiosity, which in effect reduces concern about life after death.” LiveScience also attacks Intelligent Design as bad science.

So in summary, it seems that religion is bad for one’s health, unless it operates as something like a support group or social program; that manmade global warming is true and any investigation of the ethical behavior of its scientific proponents need not be seriously considered; that Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection is considered holy writ — though it was the subject of intense scientific criticism in his day, and its adherents defend it today by persecuting its critics in academia (as Ben Stein demonstrated so well in his documentary, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*); and therefore, man, not God, is the most important being in the cosmos.

What can be said of such thinking? Belief in God, as devout Christians and Jews have long known, may dramatically shorten one’s life expectancy, in the face of persecution. Christians and Jews do not embrace their Blessed Creator in order to lengthen their life or even to gain wealth or safety. They do so because that is right and true. Their life expectancy, when the life of the world to come is considered, is infinite and blessed, while those who hiss at God and His followers will face a radically different afterlife.

God is in control of the physical world. By His will, men have the power to do all sorts of things on Earth, many of which seem extraordinarily significant to them. But can man raise the temperature of his planet? The honest evidence says “no,” but what if the answer were a qualified “yes”? In less than a moment, God could send an asteroid toward the earth and cool it off much more dramatically than man



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could ever warm it with all his efforts directed towards that purpose.

The greatest “science” in life, if that word has its root meaning of knowledge, is man’s study of the Infinite Spirit around whom all truth and goodness revolve. Just as following Him does produce happier and healthier lives (whatever professors at the Climategate University of East Anglia may say), following Him also leads to great understanding in the physical sciences. The Scientific Revolution occurred just once in human history, and its heroes were all devoutly religious: Copernicus, Napier, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and many others.

The “science” which is at war with God, like the phony research of Margaret Mead or Alfred Kinsey or Rachel Carson, nearly always seems to have a pre-determined aim before any study begins, and ignores all conflicting evidence. These scientists, lacking a sense of sin and final judgment, seek to be little gods. And they always fail.



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