

Dan Dennett

- American philosopher, writer and cognitive scientist
- Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University
- Atheist and secularist
- Received his Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford

He believes that evolution can account for the origin of morality. He believes that religious belief can be accounted for naturalistically, explaining possible evolutionary reasons for the phenomenon of religious adherence.

Similarities with Sir Lloyd Geering's beliefs

- Evolutionary approach, i.e. God is a concept created by humans. Lloyd Geering says "God does not name a cosmic reality. It is a humanly created idea in the human thought world --- a word by which we have tried to make sense of the physical world we live in".
- Dan Dennett describes religion as the key to culture. Lloyd Geering says "God is an idea that has played an extremely important centring role in our evolving culture".

Some discussion points arising from the TED talk

- Our Universities teach courses on comparative religions. Is this too late? If so, at what age should it be taught?
- Do you think that religion can be taught in the same way as other subjects, such as maths, history, biology? So long as people have such contrary religious beliefs, is it realistic to believe that it can be taught objectively, or will our personal biases inevitable affect what we teach?
- Dennett says that the evolutionary process is without design. Do you agree?
- Do conservative religious beliefs allow us to avoid taking