

I am not the smartest person in the world. I'm no Einstein, that's for sure. But I've always thought of myself as being pretty intelligent. By most worldly standards at least – I am. Like many boys, I did just enough school work to get through high school. I began to work harder and do well in college, and by seminary I was getting almost all A's. After twenty years of ministry, I returned to seminary to earn my doctorate. I hope that one day my doctoral thesis will get published. Many people consider that having advanced degrees proves one is fairly smart. Additionally, every time I've taken an IQ test, the results would enable me to join *Mensa* – if I ever wanted to.

These are some of my academic and intellectual credentials. I don't share them to brag or to impress you. I share them to make my next statement. The authors of the Harvard study recently published (*Journal of Experimental Psychology, Sept. 9, 2011 "Divine intuition: Cognitive style influences belief in God" by Shenhav, Rand and Greene.*) may think they have proved that "smart people are atheists, and no so smart people have faith"; but I think they have only proven how biased their assumptions are, and have proven how "dumb" that kind of thinking is.

In Saturday's (October 8, 2011) Metro section of *The Washington Post*, (B-2) columnist Lisa Miller, also argued about how flawed that Harvard study is, if they think they have proven this ridiculous premise. Here's how the study went. Eight hundred eighty-two people were asked first if they are believers or not. Then they were asked a series of math questions, the kind that we all hated in school, word problems. By a narrow margin, the believers scored slightly worse than the atheists, so "ergo" they believed that they proved their point. The authors argue that believers use intuition more to make decisions (so of course, they believe in God), while non-believers use logic and rationality to make decisions (so of course, they don't believe in God).

Ms. Miller addresses one aspect of this debate. She reminds us that some people's "intelligence" is intuitive, while other people's "intelligence" is logical or rational. Thinking and intelligence come in different forms and styles. Some think well on their feet, others think better in a lab, or at their desks. Some use emotional intelligence to discern the truth, while others seek only empirical data for truth. Some of us are left-brained, some of us are right-brained.

So here's the point I want to drive home: God, in his creativity, designed us to function in a variety of ways. That way we need each other. There is not a "right" way to use our minds. We all think with different strengths. Therefore, whether we have faith or choose not to have faith, is not a matter of "intelligence". I have known many extremely intelligent people who have faith. I have met many very intelligent people who don't. I have known many very simple people, with less than the highest IQs who have amazingly deep faith. I have know some simple people, who will not be convinced of God's existence, no matter what I or others may say.

I have a bias, to which I will readily confess. My bias, my belief about humanity, is this: if one looked at creation, looked at the world, looked at the intricacies of life, looked at the perfection of the human body; looked at the variety and sheer number of the different types of creatures who make up this world's inhabitants; looked at the stars, the planets and the universe; looked at all that there is to look at and study – how can anyone *not see* the reality of a divine and benevolent creator? How can one think that all of this wonder 'evolved' all by itself, without any guidance or design? One very smart person once described the odds of all THIS being accidental or natural is like believing that a tornado could blow through an airplane parts warehouse, and leave an airplane ready to fly, in its wake.

I don't think it is a matter of intelligence whether people recognize God and believe or don't. I think it is a matter of belligerence. It is a refusal to accept that there is anything greater than ourselves.

To believe in God, to marvel at anything in creation, to realize the amazingness of life, requires displacing ourselves from the center of our universe. Before science, people believed that the world was the center, and that the skies, the sun and the stars circled around the earth. Once we discovered earth is just a planet in a huge solar system, which in turn, is just a speck in a vast universe – it made people realize that we are not the center. We are still important and loved by God, but we are not the center of the universe.

If one uses whatever intelligence is their strength, and applies all the reason they can muster, I think the evidence, empirical and otherwise, will lead rational, open-minded people to see that the odds are simply too great against an argument for random accident.

Clearly, it is not true that believers are stupid and atheists are smart. I think it is equally fair to say the opposite is not true either. What is true, is that God has placed hints and evidence of his touch all over life. One believes – or does not believe – based on what they are *willing* to perceive and accept. It is not based on whether one is smart or not.