

Atheism - You know too much

And so do those who deny the existence of God

In the January issue of *National Geographic* astronomer Bradford P. Smith writes, "This universe taunts us with mysteries. When did it begin? How will it end? What laws of nature governed its creation and evolution? ... And because we think that we might be able to understand the answers, that this universe might make sense, we are building ever more magnificent instruments to probe its secrets."

But the universe has always made sense. And, before a man ever peered through the Keck Telescope or pored over images shot back from the Hubble, this universe has been repeating its insistent, inescapable message: There is a creator.

Whether or not they will admit it, every atheist, every agnostic, everyone hears and acknowledges that message.

I love his unambiguous language. He did not say, "The evidence for the existence of God is strong and ought to be considered." He did not preface Romans with five proofs for the existence of God. He said there is one powerful, divine creator?and everyone knows it.

How foolish to look ever deeper into our universe and to insist that it, and we, just happened. What would you think of a foreigner, visiting Mount Rushmore for the first time and saying, "What an extraordinary natural rock formation. And so well adapted to its environment. It has actually eroded to resemble four of your most famous presidents." The thought would never occur. Not to anyone.

Centuries ago, King David sang the truth. *"The heavens declare the glory of God... there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard"* [Psalm 19:1]. And today, living as we do in an age of "magnificent instruments," their voice is only getting louder.

But besides knowing that there is a God, everyone knows something of what that God expects of him. Again in Romans, after scrolling through a disgusting list of vices that marred his age as they do ours, Paul said, *"Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them"* [Romans 1:32].

Clearly then, a man or woman trained in pagan thought and ritual understands something of God's will. We all have a native knowledge of right and wrong. Paul referred to it elsewhere as *"the work of the law written on [our] hearts"* [Romans 2:15]. This knowledge is a vestige of what Adam had in perfection. In us, it is damaged. It is like a book with pages torn out, some ink smudged, yet still legible. To borrow a computer term, this knowledge is preloaded software. Moral absolutes are programmed into us by our manufacturer.

As if that weren't enough, every man or woman?whether Christian or not?also has a conscience. If the "work of the law" is a rule book written into a person's psyche, then conscience is a judge who, on the basis of what is written in the book, either condemns or acquits. And so don't be intimidated. Don't think that no one in this society will take you seriously unless you can raise an impregnable argument for the existence of God. God has already posted signs all around. He has hung them from trees and hurled them into space so that they cannot be missed.

God is not ignored because he is a poor communicator. He is ignored because he is hated.

Does this mean that we should not give reasons for our beliefs? No. God speaks and so should we. But remember that you are speaking to someone who already knows that there is a God, and who already knows something of what that God expects of him. Our goal is not so much to convince as it is to convict.

It may be that behind every violent, vocal denial of God's revelation is a howling conscience and a desperate attempt to suppress the haunting, ubiquitous truth.

This article was written by William C. Deutsch and originally appeared in the April 16, 1994 edition of WORLD magazine.

"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made"

[Romans 1:20]. This is how God is revealing himself to our pagan, post-Christian society. He is making himself known through creation.

"That which may be known of God,"

Paul wrote, "*is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them*" [Romans 1:19]. When he first dictated those words, he was not referring to Jews, steeped in special revelation. He was referring to cynical, debased pagans.