



VICTORY FOR THE MOTION, "THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT RELIGION," AT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED U.S. DEBATE

For the motion **Matthew Chapman** and **A.C. Grayling** Win Debate over **Dinesh D'Souza** and **Rabbi David Wolpe**

Debate was IQ2US' most-watched webcast to date; will air on NPR stations nationwide and be telecast on WNET/Thirteen on 12/17

NEW YORK – November 16, 2011 – Last night's Intelligence Squared U.S. debate ended with a narrow victory for the controversial motion, "The World Would Be Better Off Without Religion," and a record setting number of viewers of the live webcast. **Matthew Chapman** and **A.C. Grayling** won the Oxford style debate by changing the minds of 7% of the audience to agree with the resolution- 2% more than their opponents, **Rabbi David Wolpe** and **Dinesh D'Souza** (see full numbers below).

Watch the full debate streaming at Fora.tv here:

http://fora.tv/2011/11/15/Debate_The_World_Would_Be_Better_Off_Without_Religion

The motion's opponents, **Rabbi David Wolpe** and **Dinesh D'Souza** claimed that religion was a key source for good in the world by providing hope and incentive for charity. Yet it was **Chapman** and **Grayling's** arguments about the conflicting ideologies of various religions, and the harm of religious extremism, that won out in the end.

This latest intellectual matchup was IQ2US's 56th debate and was presented in partnership with Slate.

ABC News Nightline's John Donovan is the moderator, and the executive producer is Dana Wolfe.

Key Excerpts For the Motion:

MATHEW CHAPMAN

"Religion claims to provide morality. But as can be seen in its divisiveness, its homophobia and in its almost universal subjugation of women, it just as often deforms

morality. The question isn't whether religion can sometimes do good. Of course it can and has.

The question is, can we come up with something better that does not depend on dangerous and childish faith and thousands of competing gods? Can we persuade people that it's possible to live a good, peaceful and happy life guided only by human conscience and modern knowledge?"

A.C. GRAYLING

"I find very few Christians actually live the New Testament morality, they cherry pick. Unkind people would call that "hypocrisy." At the other end of the scale, however, are those who take their religion extremely seriously, the extremists, we call it them. The point about the extremists is that they are the most honest of the people who have a religious view because they commit themselves to what their tradition tells them, and they stay closest to the text. Now, if that's real religion, that's honest religion, the world is very much better off without it. And if the world is much better off without the true and the honest form of religion, why not put the hypocrites in with them, too?"

Key Excerpts Against the Motion:

DINESH D'SOUZA

"Often when we think of secular society, we think of Europe. But Europe isn't really secular. Europe is a product of 2,000 years of Jewish and Christian civilization. Even today if there's a famine in Rwanda, while much of the world ignores it, the European countries, the Western countries begin to send to food and aid, Doctors without Borders, the Red Cross. My point is this is the result of a religious training and a religious habit of mind that remains. Nietzsche once said that if we get rid of God, we've got to get rid of shadows of God. In other words, the ideas that Judaism and Christianity brought into the West and into the world, those will begin to erode as well."

RABBI DAVID WOLPE

"Religious Americans give more to charity, volunteer more, participate in civic processes more, attend more meetings, are more likely to vote, to volunteer, less likely to drink, divorce, do drugs. They are much more inclined to be optimistic and feel meaningful about life. They're less inclined to depression, less inclined to suicide, less inclined to suicidal thoughts. They are much more helpful in their communities. If you want to measure altruism and empathy, the best measure is not age, gender, income, education. It's whether you're involved in a religious community."

Before the debate, the IQ2US audience voted as follows:

- **52%** of audience agreeing with the resolution
- **26%** of audience against the resolution
- **22%** undecided

After careful consideration of the points by the audience, **Matthew Chapman** and **A.C. Grayling** won the debate: the team that moves the most votes at the end of the evening is determined the winner.

- **59%** of audience agreeing with the resolution (+7%)
- **31%** of audience against the resolution (+5%)
- **10%** undecided (-12%)

To learn more about the debate and review a detailed breakdown of how the audience voted pre- and postdebate, please visit our Facebook page at:

<http://www.facebook.com/Think2Twice>

The showdown at NYU's Skirball Center in New York City (566 LaGuardia Place) puts the leading public intellectuals in the limelight in front of a live audience for nearly two hours of heated debate.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S., please visit:
<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/index.php/past-debates/the-world-would-be-better-off-without-religion/>
- NPR will air the debate on stations nationwide and the podcast will be available to download. Please check with your local NPR stations for additional details or visit:
<http://www.npr.org/series/6263392/intelligence-squared-u-s>
- WNET/Thirteen will air this debate Saturday December 17 at 4PM

ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES (IQ2US)

Rethink your point of view with Intelligence Squared U.S. (IQ2US), Oxford-style debates live from New York City.

Based on the highly successful debate program based in London, the Intelligence Squared Foundation has presented over 50 debates on a wide range of provocative and timely topics. From global warming and the financial crisis, to Afghanistan/Pakistan and the death of mainstream media, Intelligence Squared brings together the world's leading authorities on the day's most important issues.

Since its inception in 2006, the goals have been to provide a new forum for intelligent discussion, grounded in facts and informed by reasoned analysis; to transcend the toxically emotional and the reflexively ideological; and to encourage recognition that the opposing side has intellectually respectable views.

The Rosenkranz Foundation initiated the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Series and continues to provide major support.

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