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February 9, 2009: The God Fight on London Buses

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

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Title: The God Fight on London Buses

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2/9/2009--The Washington Post reported on Friday, 2/6, that three Christian groups are now placing ads on London buses proclaiming that God exists, in response to a "high profile atheist campaign", now spreading around the world, casting doubt on the existence of God. This controversy illustrates both the rapid growth of secular society and the intellectual bankruptcy of a secularism that thinks denying the existence of a supernatural being is important. In several developed countries—the United States, Canada, Britain and others—atheists have been putting ads like the following on buses: "There is probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life." An ad like this is silly on a number of levels. Just for one thing, surely many secularists would not worry, but would be overjoyed, if there were a loving God who intended to save both the world and individuals and who resembled in his ways Jesus of Nazareth. It's just that it's not true. Naturally, religious groups could not leave these ads alone. The Russian Orthodox response reads: "There is a God. BELIEVE. Don't worry and enjoy your life." Maybe this is witnessing to the Gospel, but I doubt it. As the West becomes increasingly secular, this sort of thing is going to happen more often. So it is important to state every time it does that God is more than a claim about a supernatural being. As Jack Call entitled his new book, *God is a Symbol of Something True*. John Caputo, the radical, post-death-of-God theologian, certainly no orthodox believer, writes in the new book, *After the Death of God*, that we must "cultivate the resources in this name [God]...and...let ourselves be nourished by their force" (50) because this name safeguards "the irreducibility and unconditionality" of the event of justice to come. [quotes from Jeffrey Kosky's book review in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*]. God means that something trustworthy in reality is beyond human control. That something might be the regularity of nature, the hospitality of this planet, the wise cunning of history, or the goodness embedded in our lives. Or it might be something else, or all, and more. To say God does not exist is almost juvenile. I don't want to claim the opposite—that God exists. I want to ask, what does exist? Dear atheist, What is real? This atheist ad campaign is more posturing. I keep waiting for secularism to grow up and begin the hard work of building a sustainable human civilization.