

Dad Links Son's Suicide to 'The God Delusion'

Says atheism-promoting book hidden under mattress, last page bookmarked.

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows this article.

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By Bob Unruh
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A New York man is linking the suicide of his 22-year-old son, a military veteran who had bright prospects in [college](#), to the anti-Christian book "The God Delusion" by Richard Dawkins after a college professor challenged the son to read it.

"Three people told us he had taken a biology class and was doing well in it, but other [students](#) and the professor were really challenging my son, his faith. They didn't like him as a Republican, as a Christian, and as a conservative who believed in intelligent design," the grief-stricken father, Keith Kilgore, told WND about his son, Jesse.

"This professor either assigned him to read or challenged him to read a book, 'The God Delusion,' by Richard Dawkins," he said.

Jesse Kilgore committed suicide in October by walking into the woods near his New York home and shooting himself. Keith Kilgore said he was shocked because he believed his son was grounded in Christianity, had blogged against abortion and for family values, and boasted he'd been debating for years.

[Discover how atheism and immorality are being cleverly sold to Americans in David Kupelian's controversial best seller, "The Marketing of Evil."](#)

After Jesse's death, Keith Kilgore learned of the book assignment from two of his son's friends and a relative. He searched Jesse's room and found the book under the mattress with his son's bookmark on the last page.



Richard Dawkins

A WND message seeking a comment from Dawkins or his publisher was not returned today.

The first inkling of a reason for the suicide came, Keith Kilgore told WND, when one of Jesse's friends came to visit after word of his son's death circulated.

"She was in tears [and said] he was very upset by this book," Keith Kilgore said. "'It just destroyed him,' were her words.

"Then another friend at the funeral told me the same thing," Keith Kilgore said. "This guy was his best friend, and about the only other Christian on campus.

"The third one was the last person that my son talked to an hour before [he died,]" Keith Kilgore told WND, referring to a member of his extended family whose name is not being revealed here.

That relative, who had struggled with his own faith and had returned to Christianity, wrote in a later e-mail that Jesse "started to tell me about his loss of faith in everything."

"He was pretty much an atheist, with no belief in the existence of God (in any form) or an afterlife or even in the concept of right or wrong," the relative wrote. "I remember him telling me that he thought that murder wasn't wrong per se, but he would never do it because of the social consequences - that was all there was - just social consequences.

"He mentioned the book he had been reading 'The God Delusion' by Richard Dawkins and how it along with the science classes he had take[n] had eroded his faith. Jesse was always great about defending his beliefs, but somehow, the professors and the book had presented him information that he found to be irrefutable. He had not talked ... about it because he was afraid of how you might react. ... and that he knew most of your defenses of Christianity because he himself used them often. Maybe he had used them against his professors and had the ideas shot down."

He then explained to Jesse his own personal journey of seeking "other explanations of God's existence" and told of his ultimate return.

"I told him it was my relationship with God, not my knowledge of Him that brought me back to my faith. No one convinced me with facts. ... it was a matter of the heart."



Jesse Kilgore

Keith Kilgore believes it was a biology class that raised questions for his son, and a biology professor at [Jefferson Community College](#) in Watertown, N.Y., where his son was attending, who suggested the book.

A school spokeswoman told WND that the "God Delusion" was not a part of the biology [curriculum](#), and several of the professors she contacted said they had not even read the book. However, the spokeswoman was unable to contact all of the professors in the department and could not state that none of them had suggested the book to Jesse.

Local police also did not respond to WND inquiries about the investigation into the death.

"One of his friends, and his uncle (they did not know each other) both told me that Jesse called them hours before he took his life and that he had lost all hope because he was convinced that God did not exist, and this book was the cause," Keith Kilgore told WND.

Keith Kilgore, a retired military chaplain who has dealt with the various stages of grief and readily admits he's still in the "anger" stage over his son's death, said his son apparently had checked the "Delusion" out of the college library.

"I'm all for academic freedom," Keith Kilgore said. "What I do have a problem with is if there's going to be academic freedom, there has to be academic balance.

"They were undermining every moral and spiritual value for my [son]," he said. "They ought to be held accountable."

He suggested the moral is for Christians simply to abandon public [schools](#) wholly.

"Here's another thing," he continued. "If my son was a professing homosexual, and a professor challenged him to read [a book called] 'Preventing Homosexuality'... If my son was gay and [the book] made him feel bad, hopeless, and he killed himself, and that came out in the press, there would be an outcry.

"He would have been a victim of a hate crime and the professor would have been forced to undergo sensitivity [training](#), and there may have even been a wrongful death lawsuit.

"But because he's a Christian, I don't even get a return telephone call," the father told WND.

He said he tried to verify the book assignment himself several times, without getting a response from the school.

Jesse Kilgore blogged on [NetPotion](#) and [Newblog](#), and the [writings](#) that remained mostly addressed social ills and how anti-Christian many of the world's developments appeared to be.

He used the pen name JKrapture because, his father said, "He believed in the rapture, the evangelical concept of the Lord coming back."

On the Web, Jesse described himself as "conservative and mainly independent. I am a culture warrior and traditionalist. I have been debating since I was in 5th Grade, and never looked back. It is a habit I can't let go of."

One of Jesse's uncles, writing on the same website as Jesse, wrote: "While I knew he was having struggles with his faith, I had no idea that it ran that deep. ... There are not enough words to describe how devastated I am at his loss. I know that some of you got to know him pretty well and (since I already started getting some questions about him) felt that you all should know that he is no longer with us."

From among the online community came these responses: "I am shocked and so sorry for your loss – our loss. My prayers are with you and all of your family at this difficult time," and "I AM at a loss of words.....I am sooooo sorry to hear your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family."

Keith Kilgore told WND he feels, by allowing his son to move into the atmosphere of a secular school, like "I put a toddler in the front of my car."

"My son is the Adam Walsh of the culture war. That's who my son is," he said, referring to the child abduction victim whose case was used to create a wide range of amber alert and other programs to protect children.

He said he has a wake-up call over the anti-Christian agenda of public [education](#). And he has some goals.

"I want to hold schools accountable for what they're teaching our kids. This was malpractice," he said.

Dawkins, considered one of the world's most outspoken atheists, is a professor in the United Kingdom. He came to prominence in 1976 with his book "The Selfish Gene," promoting evolution.

In his "Delusion" treatise he claims that a supernatural creator almost certainly does not exist and that faith qualifies as a "delusion" – a fixed false belief.

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Satan is good at what he does and what he does best is lie and deceive (John 8:44, 2 Cor 11:3, Revelation 20:10).

Very few young adults growing up in Christian homes are prepared for the onslaught they will experience in college. In Jesse's case, he was not prepared for something that was said in biology class. For others it is something in geology, or astronomy that causes them to question what they have been told. Many Christian parents unwittingly send their children off to secular college with simplistic and often false creation science information they received from book selling organizations like Answers in Genesis (AiG) and Institute for Creation Research (ICR).

For example, AiG and ICR have misled (in various books that they have sold) tens-of-millions by teaching that the Biblical Flood of Noah occurred when a canopy of vapor surrounding the earth prior to the flood collapsed to create global rainfall and flooding for 40 days. AiG and ICR now realize this theory is false but refuse to widely warn their subscribers to stop using it (in the pulpit, classroom, college campus, etc.). But college professors are more than willing to point out to our children how untenable this flood theory is and how other false information put out by AiG and ICR is equally ridiculous.

When this happens, a needless crisis of faith may occur. The student thinks the Bible is not trustworthy (instead of AiG and ICR misleading them, their pastors and parents). The student may then go to the next step of wondering if the part about Jesus dying on the cross for their sin is also a fairy tale. If so, they can't talk to their parents or pastor about it because they realize these trusted adults were the ones who misled them and that they must be infected with the god delusion that Dawkins writes of.

The good news is that God's word is trustworthy and it is Dawkins who is under a godless delusion. We can send our students to college with very sound rebuttals to the evolutionary lie being spread by their professors, but in many cases, these sound scientific arguments are not found in AiG and ICR materials.

*Before sending them to secular schools and universities, I suggest that parents make sure their children have seen the documentary movies **Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed** by Ben Stein (now available on DVD), and **Unlocking the Mystery of Life** (by Illustra Media). I also suggest they read cover-to-cover the book by Dr. Walt Brown titled, **In the Beginning – Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood** (also able to be read on line for free at www.creation-science.com). If they do this, they will get a very solid scientific foundation which will help them stand against the lies of evolution in their biology, geology and astronomy classes.*