

READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

There Is a God

by

Antony Flew

with Roy Abraham Varghese

1. A theme throughout this book, and Antony Flew's life, was to "follow the argument wherever it leads," as Socrates did (p. 89). Has there ever been something that you were once 100 percent sure of and then later changed your mind about after much deliberation?
2. Flew received a lot of criticism from atheist peers after his late-in-life conversion. In fact, some charged that he was no longer of sound mind when he announced his decision and later wrote this book. Can you imagine writing a book at age eighty-four that goes against all your previous writings over a lifetime? Do you think what Flew did was crazy or brave?
3. Flew's father was a preacher, and Flew kept his atheism from his family for as long as possible "for the sake of

domestic peace and, in particular, in order to spare my father” (p. 16). Have you ever tried to conceal your beliefs? Why? What caused you to finally reveal your true feelings, if you ever did?

4. Flew is considered by many to be a pioneer in the field of atheism. He advanced the entire debate about the existence of God by arguing that “a discussion about God’s existence should start with the presumption of atheism, that the onus of proof must lie with the theists. . . . [I]t helps smoke out conceptual problems with theism that might otherwise escape attention and forces theists to begin from the absolute beginning” (p. 53). Do you believe it is easier to prove something than to disprove something? Explain.
5. One of the key discoveries that led to Flew’s recognition of the existence of intelligence was what modern science has learned about DNA: “Biologists’ investigation of DNA has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved” (p. 123). Do you find it surprising that the work of scientists ultimately led to Flew’s reversal? How can science, long considered the realm of atheists, lead to religious belief?
6. Flew writes that “my discovery of the Divine has proceeded on a purely natural level, without any reference to supernatural phenomena. . . . It has no connection with any of the revealed religions. Nor do I claim to have had any personal experience of God or any expe-

rience that may be called supernatural or miraculous. In short, my discovery of the Divine has been a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith” (p. 93). What is the difference between a pilgrimage of reason and a pilgrimage of faith?

7. Three main arguments compelled Flew to admit the need for an Intelligent Source: (1) the presence of detailed laws of nature, (2) the finely tuned universe that was perfectly receptive to life, and (3) the question of how and why life emerged from nothing (p. 89). Which argument is most compelling to you?
8. Flew ends the book by saying that he still does not necessarily believe in a personal God, nor has he made contact with the Intelligent Mind. Rather than an emotional or spiritual conversion, his was truly a philosophical one. Were you surprised by the cerebral nature of this conversion? Have you had a conversion experience? Was it more cerebral or spiritual in nature? Did Flew’s arguments cause you to change the way you think about God?