

Devoutly Questioning

*Written by Sophie Bird, Brooks School Panel Member
December 20, 2016*

The power of God, in His various forms, is compelling to the majority of the world that seeks for something to believe in during hours of darkness or simply for hope. But how do you believe in something that there is truly no empirical evidence for? This supposed “God” is perceived through countless religions, by such a vast spectrum of people all across the world. He has caused strife between social groups, nations, and personal relationships as well as being the root of many wars. But, nonetheless, so many people have faith in God and believe that He can help them. I do not believe this. Growing up in an atheist family, I developed values based not on religious reasoning, but on logic. The lack of evidence in the existence of God causes me great hesitation in believing He exists, in whichever form.

Both of my parents are atheists and neither of them come from any type of religious background. Although my parents did not find themselves associated with God, they did teach me to respect all people and their beliefs, even if I didn’t share them. I learned about religion in school and was surrounded by a mostly Catholic community in Munich. I did not identify with them. I found it strange how so many people, all over the world, could believe in something as incredibly intangible as God. The seek for hope in a nearly hopeless world can, for some people, be solved by God. But logic continues to get in the way for me. Many people have faith in God because they believe that He can help them in moments of confusion or loss of explanation—but when does he exercise His great power? How come some people get the help of God and others don’t? I find this confusing, and I am unable to look past these flaws in the existence of God to believe in Him.

Coming to Brooks—an episcopal school by tradition—was an adjustment because we have chapel three times a week. We even close each service with a prayer to God. However, I soon discovered that I wasn’t the only student who wasn’t necessarily comfortable or used to the idea of praying. Gradually, I became accustomed to the tradition and even though it was new and different, I came to really enjoy chapel! I love the chapel itself, our chaplain—who helps lead the school—is incredible, and I love the singing. Although I do not believe in God, I admire the chapel’s (and religion’s) ability to bring a community together and find common ground between people.

Religion is complicated and not only places an enormous amount of pressure on its followers to stay faithful, but also greatly affects society as a whole. The amount of pressure and scrutiny that Muslims feel from society due to the current state of ISIS and terrorism in the world is completely unjust. It simply all comes from the power of God. Through religion He forces people to follow His guidelines so that ultimately when they die they can rest in heaven, but this pressure to do exactly as God wants can be detrimental to some people. By misinterpreting or struggling with the meaning of their lives, many people turn to God. But then what happens

when God becomes the biggest part in your life and you lose perspective on reality? This obsession can be seen through the actions of suicide bombers. Even though God is supposed to be this overbearing father to all of His disciples, He somehow allows brutal acts of murder carried out in His name. So much of the pain and suffering in the world comes from this unknown power that may not even exist.

God's presence is supposedly everywhere and in everything, and the power he holds is meant to be infinite. But there is no reason for me to believe that He even exists, and the miracles that are claimed to have happened through the Bible, the Qur'an, and any other religious scripture can be proven wrong with science. In my opinion, this lack of evidence leaves an almost empty society since there is no proof that what some people base their lives off of even exists, and I need tangible evidence before I can believe.