

Actor: Slighting Christianity Is the Sign of an Ill-Read Mind

John Rhys-Davies is a veteran actor perhaps best known for his role as Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings*.

He's also a [staunch defender](#) of Western Civilization, shunning politically correct fears and declaring that those offended by suggestions that not all value systems are equal "are fools, and ultimately, scoundrels."

Rhys-Davies' recent statements demonstrate he refuses to be placed in the "fool" category. During [an interview](#) at the Movieguide Awards, Rhys-Davies made some blunt revelations about his own beliefs and the role of Christianity in history.

Despite his role in many family- and religious-friendly productions, Rhys-Davies does not consider himself a Christian. "I count myself a rationalist and a skeptic," he said. Yet he is in no hurry to shun Christianity. Instead he notes, "I find myself constantly defending Christians and Christianity."

Rhys-Davies engages in this defense because he recognizes the positive impact Christianity has made throughout the history of the world:

[W]e seem to forget that Christian civilization has made the world a better place than it ever was. One of the great glories was the abolition of slavery. And there is still slavery and that makes me very mad.

He goes on to credit Christianity for the many freedoms we enjoy:

All the things that we value, the right of free speech, the right of the individual conscience – these evolved in first and second century Roman Christendom where the individual Christian said, ‘I have a right to believe what I believe and not what the emperor tells me.’ And from that our whole idea of democracy and the equality that we have has developed.

His words echo those of another European, Alexis de Tocqueville. In [Democracy in America](#), Tocqueville recognizes the supremacy of Christianity in America, crediting religion’s role as essential to the nation’s system of government:

Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must nevertheless be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of free institutions. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all the Americans have a sincere faith in their religion, for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation, and to every rank of society.

Those opinions are no longer shared by many in society. Instead, those who hold on to religion – Christianity in particular – are often mocked as misguided, unintelligent individuals. In fact, the opposite is the case, explains Rhys-Davies:

We owe Christianity the greatest debt of thanks that a generation can ever have, and to slight it and to dismiss it as being irrelevant is the detritus of rather ill-read minds, I think.

Is he right? Is Christianity, now the butt of so many jokes and insults, really the institution to which we owe so many positive developments in history, as well as the freedoms we now take for granted? If so, then perhaps Rhys-Davies is correct in implying that those who dismiss it are merely wearing their ignorance on their sleeves.

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