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Richard Dawkins says he's not entirely sure God doesn't exist

by Al Webb by Religion News Service

LONDON -- A controversial Oxford University professor billed by many as the world's "most famous atheist" now says he is not 100 percent sure that God doesn't exist -- but just barely.

In a 100-minute debate with Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams on Thursday, Richard Dawkins surprised his online and theater audiences by conceding a personal chink of doubt about his conviction that there is no such thing as a creator.

But, to the amusement of the archbishop and others, the evolutionary biologist swiftly added that he was "6.9 out of seven" certain of his long-standing atheist beliefs.

Replying to moderator Anthony Kenny, a noted English philosopher, Dawkins said, "I think the probability of a supernatural creator existing (is) very, very low."

Dawkins, author of "The God Delusion" and other best-sellers, is a leader of the "New Atheist" movement that aggressively challenges belief in God and criticizes harm done in the name of religion.

"What I can't understand is why you can't see (that life started from nothing and) is such a staggering, elegant, beautiful thing, why would you want to clutter it up with something so messy as a God," Dawkins told Williams, according to *The Daily Telegraph* account.

The archbishop, who heads both the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion, replied that he "entirely agreed" with the "beauty" part of Dawkins' statement -- but said "I'm not talking about God as an extra who you can shoehorn onto that."

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