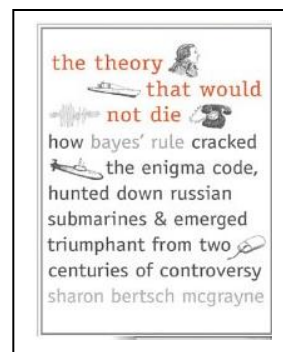
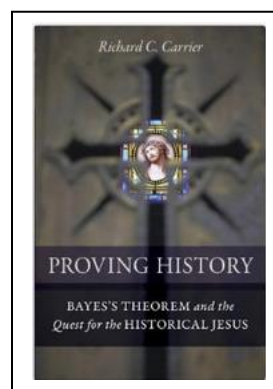


Bayes' Theorem resurgence and use in historical/biblical research.

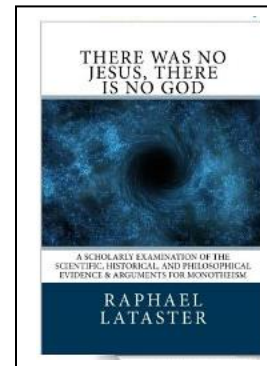
I've been teaching statistics at community colleges for over a decade now. About a year ago, I found, bought, and read with interest *The Theory That Would Not Die: How Bayes' Rule Cracked the Enigma Code, Hunted Down Russian Submarines, and Emerged Triumphant from Two Centuries of Controversy* by Sharon Bertsch McGrayne.



The “species” of statistics taught in colleges in the US these days is “frequentist”, as opposed to “Bayesian”. I found the book a fun read, which you can pretty much gather from the great title. I suggest this book for extra credit reading in my statistics classes. I find it amusing that there have been warring camps (religions?) among statisticians, for and against Bayesian analysis. One of the most vocal opponents of Bayesian analysis was Ronald Fisher, who wrote a seminal book on frequentist statistics, did important work on statistics and evolution, and had Fisher Hall at Michigan Tech named after him (at least I assume so), where I studied mathematics for six years.

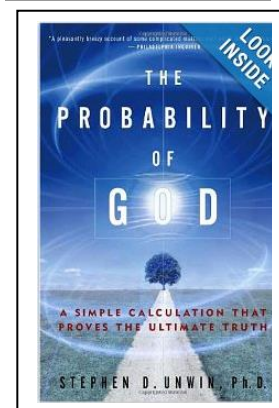


Recently, I found *Proving History: Bayes's Theorem and the Quest for the Historical Jesus* by Richard Carrier. I'm reading it now (simultaneously an audiobook and a Kindle book version: a lot of the text makes good “ear reading”, but the equations really need visual backup). It's proving a good read, and it sparked my interest in the application of Bayes' Theorem to historical and biblical research.



Proving History led me to *there was no Jesus, there is no God* by Raphael Lataster. I've recently downloaded a Kindle edition, and will read it as soon as I finish with Carrier's book. It looks promising.

Finally, while preparing this note, I found *The Probability of God: A Simple Calculation That Proves the Ultimate Truth* by Stephen D. Unwin. I've ordered a paper copy of it. Even though, or perhaps especially because, it represents “the other side of the argument”, I want to read it as a check on my own confirmation bias.



When I'm done reading and digesting all of these titles, I'd be willing to do a guest presentation on *Ask an Atheist* if you'd like that.

Thanks a lot for great presentation last night. We had a good turnout and some fine discussion. Sorry I wasn't able to come to the post-show get-together, but I explained the reason why. Maybe some time in the future.