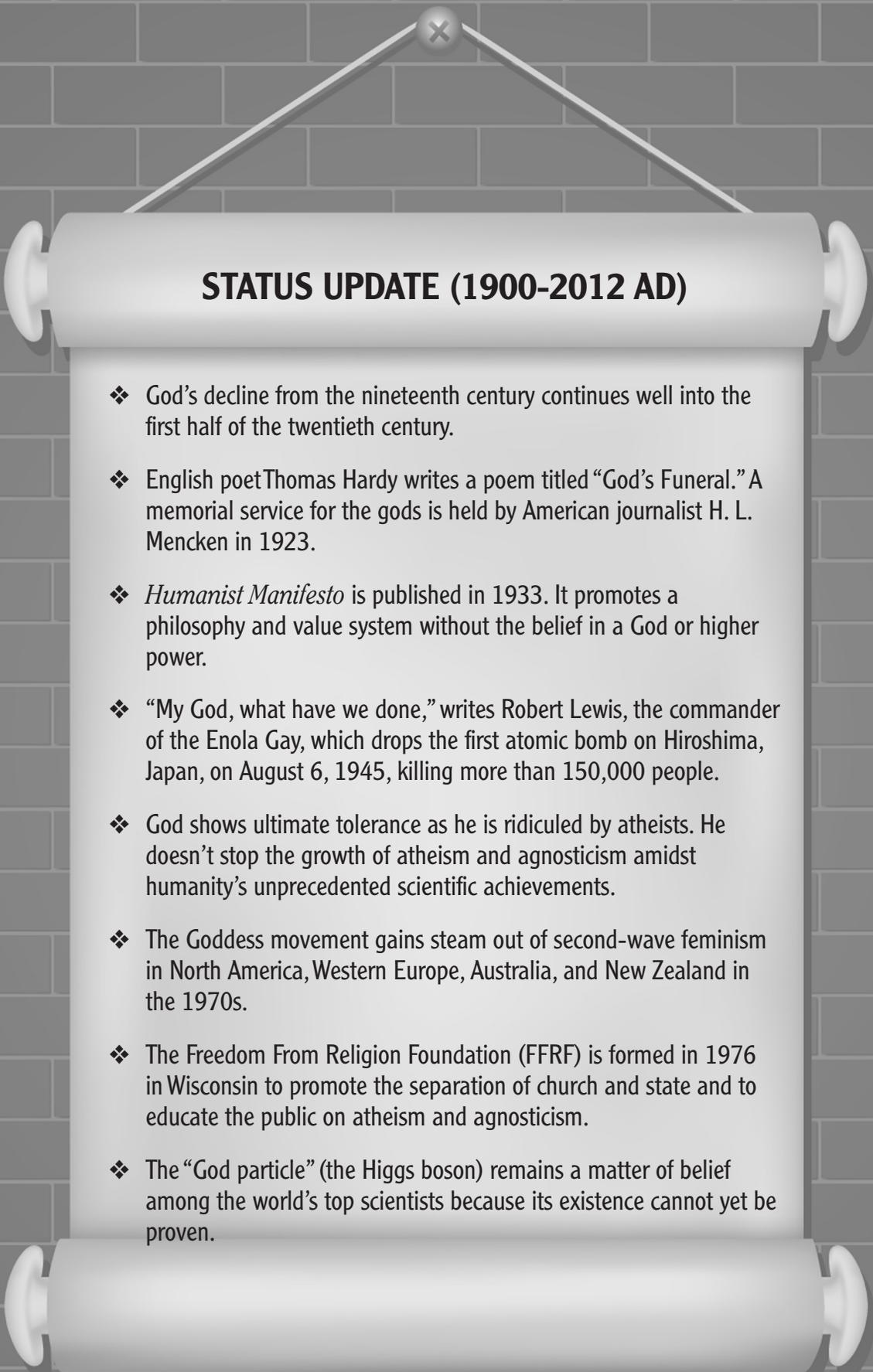


9

God is Back (1900 to 2012 AD)

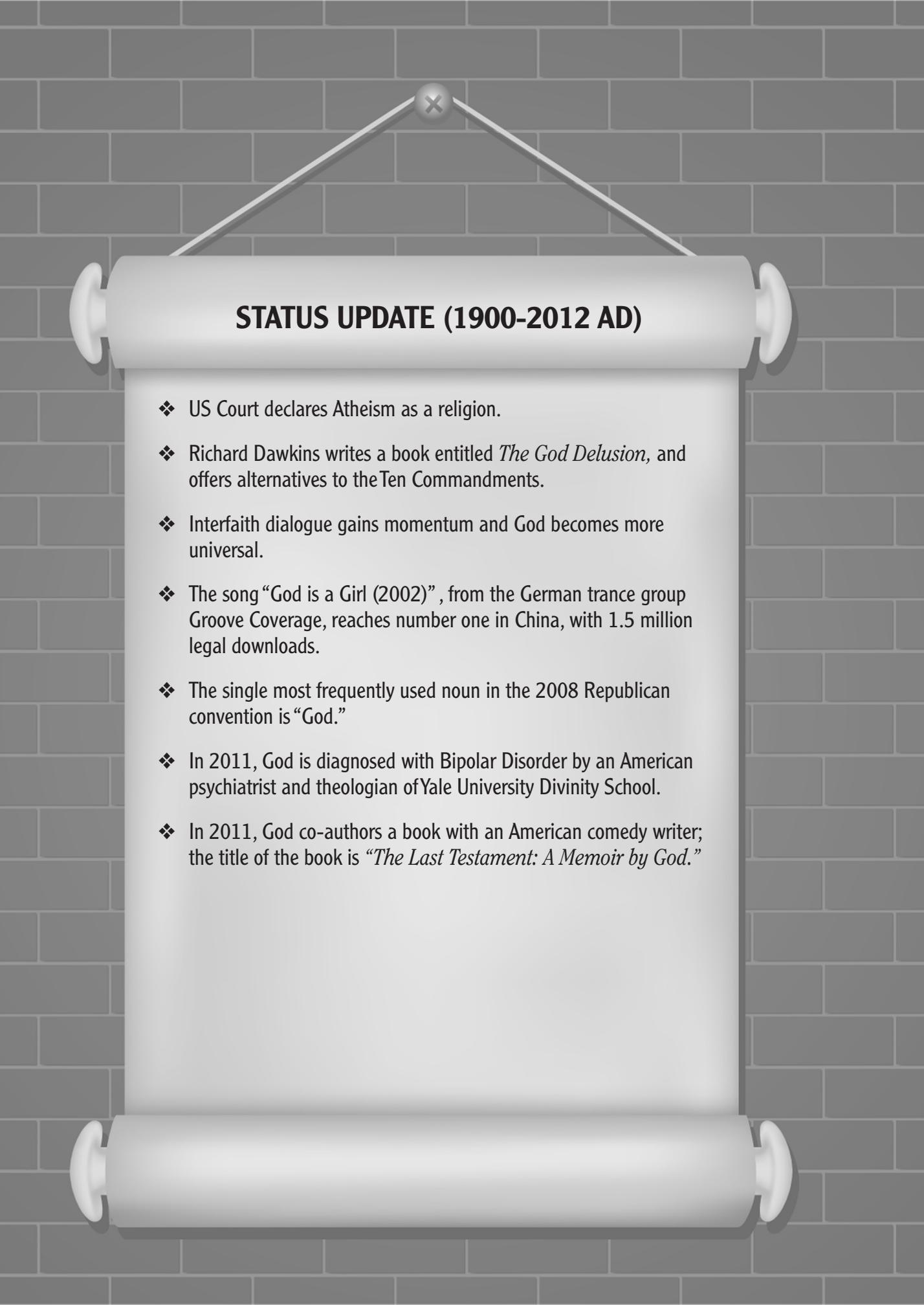
“What we came across in these blood thirsty times
With their smoke of burning trash, their dead ashes
As we weren’t able to stop looking
We often stopped to look at the names of God
We lifted them with tenderness because they reminded us
Of our ancestors, of the first people, those who said the prayers
Those who discovered the hymn that united them in
misfortune
And now seeing the empty fragments which sheltered those
ancient people
We feel those smooth substances,
Worn out and used up by good and by evil.”

—PABLO NERUDA (1904-1973), GAUTAMA CHRIST



STATUS UPDATE (1900-2012 AD)

- ❖ God's decline from the nineteenth century continues well into the first half of the twentieth century.
- ❖ English poet Thomas Hardy writes a poem titled "God's Funeral." A memorial service for the gods is held by American journalist H. L. Mencken in 1923.
- ❖ *Humanist Manifesto* is published in 1933. It promotes a philosophy and value system without the belief in a God or higher power.
- ❖ "My God, what have we done," writes Robert Lewis, the commander of the Enola Gay, which drops the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, killing more than 150,000 people.
- ❖ God shows ultimate tolerance as he is ridiculed by atheists. He doesn't stop the growth of atheism and agnosticism amidst humanity's unprecedented scientific achievements.
- ❖ The Goddess movement gains steam out of second-wave feminism in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand in the 1970s.
- ❖ The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is formed in 1976 in Wisconsin to promote the separation of church and state and to educate the public on atheism and agnosticism.
- ❖ The "God particle" (the Higgs boson) remains a matter of belief among the world's top scientists because its existence cannot yet be proven.



STATUS UPDATE (1900-2012 AD)

- ❖ US Court declares Atheism as a religion.
- ❖ Richard Dawkins writes a book entitled *The God Delusion*, and offers alternatives to the Ten Commandments.
- ❖ Interfaith dialogue gains momentum and God becomes more universal.
- ❖ The song “God is a Girl (2002)”, from the German trance group Groove Coverage, reaches number one in China, with 1.5 million legal downloads.
- ❖ The single most frequently used noun in the 2008 Republican convention is “God.”
- ❖ In 2011, God is diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder by an American psychiatrist and theologian of Yale University Divinity School.
- ❖ In 2011, God co-authors a book with an American comedy writer; the title of the book is *“The Last Testament: A Memoir by God.”*

NOTES FROM HISTORY (1900 TO 2012 AD)

This century began with modest horse-drawn carts and ended with space shuttles. More technological advances were made in this century than in all the previous centuries combined. Home appliances, personal computers, mobile phones, transportation technology, information technology, and medical advances radically altered daily lives of humans.

Humanity's search for God or the Supreme Being continued into outer space. The discovery of the theory of relativity and quantum physics changed the worldview of scientists completely. It was realized that the universe is ever-expanding and much more complex than humans could ever imagine.

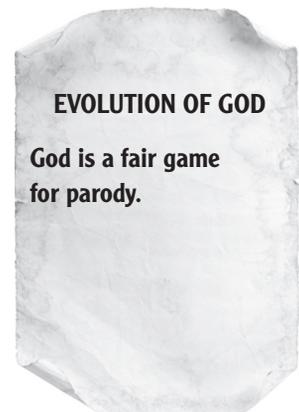
The world population increased from two billion in 1927 to six billion in 1999 and reached seven billion in 2012. Of the seven billion people, less than 3% are atheists (non-believers in God), and the remaining 97% believe in one form of God or another. More than 50% of the world's population are followers of Abrahamic religions (~33% Christianity, ~22% Islam, <1% Judaism). Other major religious groups are: Hinduism, ~14%; Buddhism, ~7%; traditional Chinese religions, ~6%; other religions ~7%. About 12% of the world's population claim to be "non-religious," which includes atheists.

Computers were invented during this period and have gradually taken control of our lives. We are dependent on computers in all aspects of existence. In this period, human mobility also expanded greatly, as cruise ships and airlines made world travel possible for the general masses.

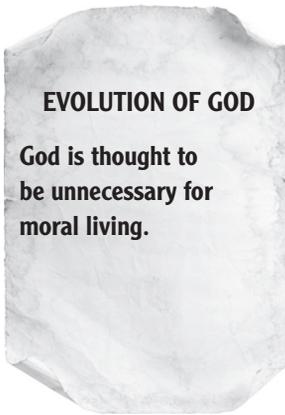
English poet Thomas Hardy wrote a poem entitled "God's Funeral" between 1908 and 1910. In the poem, he admits:

"I did not forget
That what was mourned for, I, too
Once had prized."

God and religion were ridiculed by atheists, as atheism and agnosticism flourished amidst hitherto unseen scientific achievements. American satirist Ambrose Bierce published *The Devil's Dictionary* in 1911, in which "pray" is defined as: "To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy." Steve Eley, an American speculative fiction author and podcaster, produced a manifesto about the Invisible Pink Unicorn, which stated: "Invisible Pink Unicorns are beings of great spiritual power. We know this because they are capable of being invisible and pink at the same time. Like all religions, the Faith of the Invisible Pink Unicorns is based upon both logic and faith. We have faith that they are pink; we logically know that they are invisible because we can't see them."



World War I, a major war centered in Europe, raged from 1914 to 1918 and left about twenty million people dead. The four major imperial powers—the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires—were militarily and politically defeated. The first two empires lost a great amount of territory, while the last two were dismantled entirely. Several smaller states emerged in Europe, and the League of Nations, a predecessor of today's United Nations, was formed to promote peace across the world. Political, social, and cultural ideologies were drastically changed in the aftermath of World War I. The Russian Revolution of 1917 is considered to have been an outcome of the revolutionary social thinking arising out of the privations of the war. Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), the first head of state of the Soviet Union, blamed religion for the social and political perils of his country and declared: “Even the bare mention of a citizen’s religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated.”



A worldwide influenza pandemic, called the Spanish Flu, killed fifty to one hundred million people between 1918 and 1920. An economic boom followed World War I in Europe, and the period between 1920 and 1929 is known there as the “Golden Twenties.” Communism, a godless religion, started gaining popularity because of the apparent success of the Soviet Revolution.

In 1923, the American journalist H. L. Mencken held a memorial service for gods, who, as he put it, had “gone down the chute.” He asked: “Where is the graveyard of dead gods? What lingering mourner waters their mounds?... Men labored for generations to build vast temples to them—temples with stones as large as hay-wagons. The business of interpreting their whims occupied thousands of priests, wizards, archdeacons, evangelists, haruspices, bishops, archbishops. To doubt them was to die, usually at the stake. Armies took to the field to defend them against infidels: villages were burned, women and children were butchered, cattle were driven off... They were gods of the highest standing and dignity—gods of civilized peoples—worshiped and believed in by millions. All were theoretically omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal. And all are dead.”

In 1925, John Baird invented the mechanical television. Jazz and jazz-influenced dancing became very popular throughout the decade. The American stock market crashed in October of 1929. The Great Depression, an economic crisis, spread across the globe. Unemployment in the U.S.A. rose to almost 25%.

In 1933, American philosopher Roy Sellars and Unitarian minister Raymond Bragg authored *A Humanist Manifesto* (commonly referred to as *Humanist Manifesto I*). Sixty-five people were asked to sign the manifesto, but only 34 agreed. The signatories included ten professors, seven ministers, and one rabbi. The 1,109 words manifesto affirmed fifteen beliefs without any belief in supernatural deities. It proclaimed that the universe is self-existing and is not created. This historic document reflected the hope of liberal thinkers of American society for establishing the rule of reason over revelation.