

## **Flehinger Clip 4 Transcript**

BRETT FLEHINGER: So the first off is one thing I think we need to understand is it was not a critique of outmoded backwards religion. If you read Mencken, the whole point is that these are morons and rubes and hillbillies and hicks. And in fact, if you look at the handout I gave you, he emphasizes again and again this is about superstition.

To Mencken, the rationalist product of the enlightenment, religion is basically just magical belief. Any of you study reli-- wait, I know at least one of you is in the committee to study religion. And I know there's a graduate student in religion.

Give me another view of religion than this is just magical belief. Or it's all magic? What's another way of understanding religion? Yeah, Brett.

BRETT: I guess you could see it in a social aspect, where it provides both community and also a set of moral norms or social order.

BRETT FLEHINGER: So you're seeing it in an ethical dimension. You're seeing it in a sociological dimension. And I think-- what was the third one you said? Because I jumped too quickly.

BRETT: Moral? Or--

BRETT FLEHINGER: Yeah, and so that's in the--

BRETT: Social.

BRETT FLEHINGER: Yeah, exactly. OK, perfect. What else? Yeah, Tyler.

TYLER: There's the idea of death is incredibly scary. So it's a form of terror management to think--

BRETT FLEHINGER: OK, terror management or coping mechanism. OK, other-- yeah, Gabe. Behind you.

STUDENT: This connects to what Brett said about community. But it can be a source of identity.

BRETT FLEHINGER: It could be a source of identity. Exactly. [? Wherein ?] William James Hall-- William James wrote incredibly, intellectually, and thoughtfully, and rationally about religion. You don't have to be religious to understand it as an organized, systematized body of thought-- multiple bodies of thought.