

Nonbelievers

Put them [Bill Gates and Warren Buffett] together with Andrew Carnegie, famous for his freethinking, and those three of the four greatest American philanthropists have been atheists or agnostics.

(The exception is John D. Rockefeller.)

In a country in which 96% percent of the population say they believe in a supreme being, that's a striking fact. It means that in one sense, Gates and Buffett are probably less self-interested in their charity than someone like Mother Teresa, who as a pious Roman Catholic believed in reward and punishment in the afterlife.

Peter Singer