



# Willamette Freethinker



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Corvallis Secular Society (CSS) is a Humanist and Freethought society for all nontheists of good will.

CSS is affiliated with the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH).

## Announcements

It's Summer Solstice, and time for another CSS Potluck! Bring a dish to share with everyone, and plan to arrive at Corl House by 1pm this Saturday (6/17) for a good time with your secular friends...

Sorry, no "Voice of an Angel" column this month — between finishing her column, and completing an extra-special Father's Day present for my aging 93-year-old father in time to mail to Houston, Angela chose the latter. Do I have a wonderful wife, or what?

### The Skeptic's Toolbox 2006:

#### The Healthy Skeptic

will be held at the University of Oregon  
August 10-13, 2006.

This workshop is sponsored by CSICOP  
(The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of  
Claims of the Paranormal).

**Partial Workshop Description:** As a skeptic you demand good evidence before you accept claims. You possess tools that help you do this. However, some assertions rely on data and methods that use sophisticated and specialized knowledge. Health and medical issues, which will be the topic of Toolbox 2006, are an example. You probably lack expertise in...arcane information upon which health and medical claims depend.... You need not be intimidated when confronted with such claims.... Given certain principles and diligence, you can compensate for your lack of specialized expertise. We will provide you the tools to cope with even the most difficult claims....

**Faculty:** James Alcock, York University; Jerry Andrus, magician, inventor, CSICOP Fellow (and CSS member); Barry Beyerstein, Simon Fraser University; Ray Hyman, University of Oregon; Loren Pankratz, Oregon Health Sciences University; and Wally Sampson, Editor, Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine.

**Cost:** \$159. Saturday dinner/magic show, \$25. Room and board, or just meals, available on campus.

**Registration:** 1-800-634-1610.

**Information:** Barry Karr, 1-716-636-1425, ext. 217.

## Lioness in Zoo Kills Man Who Invoked God

KIEV (Reuters) — A man shouting that God would keep him safe was mauled to death by a lioness in Kiev zoo after he crept into the animal's enclosure, a zoo official said on Monday.

"The man shouted 'God will save me, if he exists', lowered himself by a rope into the enclosure, took his shoes off and went up to the lions," the official said.

"A lioness went straight for him, knocked him down and severed his carotid artery."

The incident, Sunday evening when the zoo was packed with visitors, was the first of its kind at the attraction. Lions and tigers are kept in an "animal island" protected by thick concrete blocks.

## CSS Meetings and Events

### Calendar:

Saturday, Jun 17 <sup>th</sup>	1:00-4:00	CSS potluck
Saturday, Jul 15 <sup>th</sup>	2:00-4:00	CSS regular meeting
Saturday, Aug 19 <sup>th</sup>	2:00-4:00	CSS regular meeting

### Regular meeting time:

Third Saturday of each month, from 2:00-4:00 pm.

### Regular meeting location:

Corl House (3975 NW Witham Hill Dr, Corvallis).

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# From the President

## American Morality

**The foundation of morality is to have done,  
once and for all, with lying.**

— T. H. Huxley: *Science and Morals*

Are Americans more moral than other people? Or are we the same as others: a mixture of good and bad?

Our nation was founded by people who believed that there is a constancy of human nature, and that this nature included a tendency toward evil as well as toward good. This, to my mind, is a rational, secular viewpoint. The founders established a nation guided by a constitution that minimized the power of evil through the rule of law, democratic accountability, and constitutional checks. They realized that Americans are the same as other people, and that the founding principles of our country, written into our Constitution, would minimize the power of evil in our society. Among these principles are the separation of powers among three equal branches of the federal government, and the separation of religion and government.

With tongue in cheek, Mencken defined American morality as it had become effectively perceived in 1923:

A sound American is simply one who has put out of his mind all doubts and questionings, and who accepts instantly, and as incontrovertible gospel, the whose body of official doctrine of his day, whatever it may be and no matter how often it may change. The instant he challenges it, no matter how timorously and academically, he ceases by that much to be a loyal and creditable citizen of the Republic.

— H. L. Mencken,  
*Baltimore Evening Sun*,  
3/12/1923

Is President Bush's view of American morality closer to that of our nation's founders, or to a literal interpretation of Mencken's definition? ("If you're not with us, you're against us." Bush has stated. Compare with "To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." Theodore Roosevelt.)

*The Sunday Times* of June 4 has an article that addressed this question. It is "The horrors really are your America, Mr Bush," by Andrew Sullivan [ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,29449-2209636.html> ]. Mr Sullivan writes:

"This is not America." Those words were President George W Bush's attempt to explain the horrors of Abu Ghraib prison on the Arabic-language network Alhurra in 2004. He spoke the words as if

they were an empirical matter, but a cognitive dissonance could be sensed through them.

If the men and women who tortured and abused and murdered at Abu Ghraib did not represent America, what did they represent? They wore the uniforms of the United States military. They were under the command of the American military. In the grotesque, grinning photographs they clearly seemed to believe that what they were doing was routine and approved.

Almost two years after the torture story broke Congress finally roused itself and passed an amendment to a defence appropriations bill by John McCain that forbade the use of any "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" of detainees by any American official anywhere in the world. It was passed by veto-proof margins and Bush signed it. But he appended a "signing statement" insisting that, as commander-in-chief, he retained the right to order torture if he saw fit.

This has become typical of Bush. He ignores Congress, the Courts, and all laws when it suits his purpose. Last November, Republican Congressional leaders met with Bush to discuss renewing the Patriot Act. One aide said, "Mr. President, there is a valid case that the provisions in this law undermine the Constitution." "Stop throwing the Constitution in my face," Bush screamed back. "It's just a goddamned piece of paper!" [See page 6.]

Mr. Sullivan writes that, when he has brought up the question of American military atrocities with senators and senior administration officials in private, "Their eyes flicker down or away. Some refuse to discuss the matter, as if it is too much to contemplate that the US has become a country that detains people without trial or due process, and reserves the right to torture them."

Bush never acknowledges his responsibility for these atrocities (more of which have been revealed recently). (Anyone remember the My Lai massacre?) Mr. Sullivan continues:

His obdurate refusal to change course, to provide sufficient troops, to fire his defence secretary, to embrace, rather than evade, the McCain amendment has robbed him of any excuse, any evasion of responsibility.

And yet he still evades it. Last week he spoke of Abu Ghraib as something that had somehow happened to him and to his country, almost as if he were not the commander-in-chief or president of the country that had committed such abuse. When the evidence is presented to him, he displaces it. He puts it to one side. In his mind America is a

force for good. And so it cannot commit evil. And if he says that often enough it will somehow become true. In this way his powers of denial kick in like a forcefield against reality.

It is, I think, an integral part of his own world view, which is that of a former addict whose life was transformed by a rigid form of fundamentalist Christianity. "[My faith] frees me to enjoy life and not worry what comes next," he told the reporter Fred Barnes. When you know you have been saved, when you know your motives are pure, when, as Bush so often puts it, your "heart" is a good one, then it follows that you cannot commit evil. Or if you do, it doesn't attach to you. Somehow, it isn't yours, even when it is.

In this sense fundamentalist Christianity can enable evil by promoting the lie that some humans have been saved from it....

What is so tragic about this presidency is that it has simultaneously proclaimed American goodness while dismantling the constitutional protections and laws that guard against American evil. The good intention has overwhelmed the fact of human fallibility. But reality — human reality — eventually intrudes. Denial breaks down. The physical evidence of torture, of murder, of atrocity, slowly overwhelms the will to disbelieve in it.

I am sorry, Mr President. This is America. And you have helped make it so.

Americans are not inherently morally superior to other people. Our secular Constitution and body of laws, along with a system of free or relatively inexpensive education and the free and open exchange of ideas, has helped our society behave as well as it has. But now, in my view, America is rapidly spiraling downward toward a theocratic dictatorship. If we Americans don't wake up soon, it may not matter if we wake up at all.

*John Dearing*  
President of CSS

**Fear paralyzes the brain.**

**Progress is born of courage.**

**Fear believes -- courage doubts.**

**Fear falls upon the earth and prays --  
courage stands erect and thinks.**

**Fear retreats -- courage advances.**

**Fear is barbarism -- courage is civilization.**

**Fear believes in witchcraft, in devils and in  
ghosts.**

**Fear is religion -- courage is science.**

— Robert G. Ingersoll, "The Ghosts", 1877

## From the Editor: Trying to Keep Up

Lewis Black's new comedy special on HBO premiered last night. Angela and I have enjoyed Lewis Black, ever since discovering him on The Daily Show on Comedy Central several years ago. Last night, amidst all the laughter, he made an interesting observation: he commented that it's tough being a comedian these days, because the Bush Administration keeps coming out with new material so quickly! He doesn't have time to work the latest atrocity into his act, before the next atrocity overtakes it!

Hearing that, it occurred to me — this is the same problem I have with this newsletter these days. I want each newsletter to at least MENTION any significant event in the areas we cover — but there's just too much! One person just can't keep up with it all. Even the occasional double-size issue just isn't enough to do justice to the events unfolding around us.

Some of the things I should be covering, but just don't have room (or time) for, include:

- Al-Zarqawi being killed in Iraq (we actually knew where he was and could have easily killed or captured him BEFORE the war, but the Bush team wanted him kept alive to be an ongoing reason to HAVE the war).
- A federal court has started hearing the ACLU case against Bush's spying on all Americans.
- Robert Kennedy Jr. has written an EXCELLENT (and LONG) piece summarizing all of the evidence that the Ohio presidential vote in 2004 was rigged. This is not "tin foil hat conspiracy stuff" — this is the real deal. I \*WISH\* I could include the article in this newsletter. For the sake of democracy itself, please sit down at your computer, type this URL into your web browser and READ THE WHOLE THING:

[http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was\\_the\\_2004\\_election\\_stolen](http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was_the_2004_election_stolen)

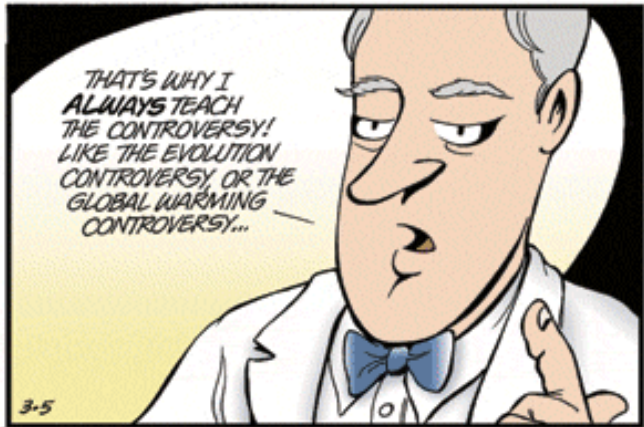
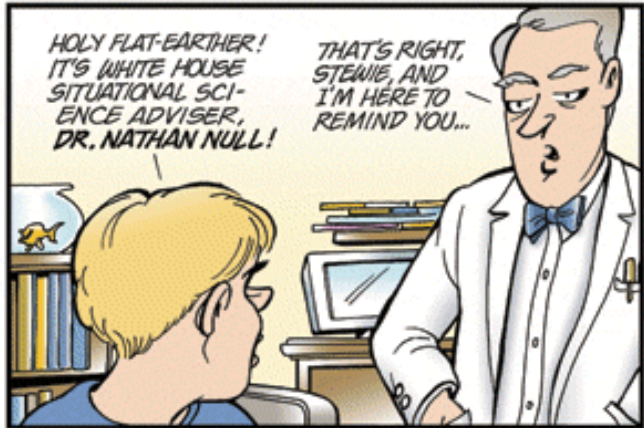
...And then there's ALWAYS more critical material that I don't even think of until after the newsletter goes to press each month. That drives me nuts! I just KNOW there's something else I should be talking about... probably something more important than some other stuff I \*DID\* put in the newsletter. But I just can't think of it.

So that's where you guys can help me. When you run into an article online that you think should be included (or if you're feeling inspired to write something yourself), email it to me at [Editor@CorvallisSecular.org](mailto:Editor@CorvallisSecular.org)! Put "WF: " at the start of the subject line (include the space after the colon), and it will automatically filter into my **Willamette Freethinker** folder for newsletter material. I can't guarantee I'll publish everything, but it might help me avoid missing the important stuff. (I do try to favor original material from members.) Thanks!

*Reed Byers*  
Editor, *Willamette Freethinker*

# Doonesbury

by Gary Trudeau, 3/5/2006



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www.doonesbury.com

G.B. Trudeau

# The Gloves Are Off

by Mollie Bradley-Martin, 6/8/2006

<http://www.liberalgirlnextdoor.blogspot.com/>

Christians are destroying the fabric of our society. Just listen to Ann Coulter spew her hatred toward the widows of 9/11, Pat Robertson call for the assassination of a foreign leader, Jerry Falwell blame feminists and gays for 9/11 and it becomes very clear that Christian activists are using God to spread hate and create divisions that serve their narrow personal agendas at the expense of American society.

We have worked long and hard in this country to overcome our fears and bigotry and have even taken great steps, like amending our constitution, to better reflect our values as an open, free and fair democracy. To paraphrase Maya Angelou, when we knew better, we did better. We righted the wrong of slavery, we righted the wrong of excluding blacks and women from voting, we even tried to help desegregation along by bussing students and providing guidelines for college admissions and hiring practices. Now, because Christians were unable to stop this progress all along the way, they have found in George W. Bush an ally that will help them turn back time and roll back the hard fought progress we've made.

Make no mistake, it was Christians that killed "witches" in Salem, it was Christians that walked around in white robes and hoods while they lynched black men and burned down their homes, it is Christians that are willing to kill abortion doctors in an effort to get the rest of us under their God's thumb and it is Christians that are continuing every day to promote homophobia that contributes to the violence toward, and discrimination of, gay people. Perhaps religious tolerance has outlived its usefulness in this country.

Christians are, by the millions, enjoying books that describe in gory detail the torture and annihilation of us non-believers and now they are set to unleash video games for their youth that will provide them the opportunity to live in a virtual world where killing non-believers on the streets of New York will make them winners. This scares the crap out of me because Christians already believe fantastic things that defy logic, how can we be assured that these Christian youth will be able to make the distinction between the fantasy game on their X-box and the world outside their window? Where is all the Christian outrage about violence on this one? Or are they hypocrites that find violence in the name of God laudable?

Why am I supposed to have tolerance for them when they have none for the rest of us? I'm all for a "live and let live" society within the parameters set by law, but all groups,

Christians included, must abide by that same principle in order for it to work. But we all know that they don't, and their religious freedom is impinging on the constitutional rights of others, surely our founding fathers would be appalled.

We have a very vocal minority in this country that is hell bent on creating a society that is divided, angry and hostile toward progress. Christians are the most dangerous special interest group that is currently lobbying our elected leaders and they have degraded our public discourse and torn apart the complicated yet beautiful

patchwork of diverse interests and needs that has served us well.

They are contributing to the dumbing down of our society by promoting creationism in our schools, ridiculing science and by forcing their black and white views on a world of grays.

**We have a very vocal minority in this country that is hell bent on creating a society that is divided, angry and hostile toward progress.**

Christianity promotes a narrow worldview that cannot be squared with the complicated prospect of dealing effectively with globalization, geo-political conflicts and an increasingly diverse population. Nuance has become a bad word in politics, but it is most critical in governing to understand that complex problems can only be solved with nuanced solutions. These loudmouthed few have a disproportionate amount of influence on our political process and on the way the issues are debated. Tolerating the religious views of others, in private life is fine, but tolerating their religious views in matters of law and policy is a mistake that we will pay a very high price for.

Now certainly, not all Christians are bad, evil, bigoted people, it would be ridiculous for me to paint them all with the same brush, but Christians that continue to take a passive approach to dealing with their most vocal advocates are contributing to the problem, and by their silence are giving their consent. Those of us outside the church carry no influence with the Ann Coulters, Sam Brownbacks, Pat Robertsons, Bill O'Reillys and Jerry Falwells that speak so loudly on behalf of Christians. Only those within the church have any sway with them at all. Until Christians start speaking out en masse, the rest of us have no assurances that their religion has been hijacked for purposes they don't support. In fact, their silence suggests the opposite, and these regressive bigots are furthering an agenda with broad Christian support. If that is not the case, by all means stand up, speak up and clear out the rubbish. For all of the damage that these loudmouthed hate mongers are doing to this country, they certainly aren't doing real Christians any favors either.

# Bush on the Constitution: “It’s just a goddamned piece of paper”

by Doug Thompson, *Capital Hill Blue*, 12/9/2005

<http://www.prisonplanet.com/articles/december2005/091205pieceofpaper.htm>

Last month, Republican Congressional leaders filed into the Oval Office to meet with President George W. Bush and talk about renewing the controversial USA Patriot Act.

Several provisions of the act, passed in the shell shocked period immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, caused enough anger that liberal groups like the American Civil Liberties Union had joined forces with prominent conservatives like Phyllis Schlafly and Bob Barr to oppose renewal.

GOP leaders told Bush that his hardcore push to renew the more onerous provisions of the act could further alienate conservatives still mad at the President from his botched attempt to nominate White House Counsel Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court.

“I don’t give a goddamn,” Bush retorted. “I’m the President and the Commander-in-Chief. Do it my way.”

“Mr. President,” one aide in the meeting said. “There is a valid case that the provisions in this law undermine the Constitution.”

“Stop throwing the Constitution in my face,” Bush screamed back. “It’s just a goddamned piece of paper!”

I’ve talked to three people present for the meeting that day and they all confirm that the President of the United States called the Constitution “a goddamned piece of paper.”

And, to the Bush Administration, the Constitution of the United States is little more than toilet paper stained from all the shit that this group of power-mad despots have dumped on the freedoms that “goddamned piece of paper” used to guarantee.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, while still White House counsel, wrote that the “Constitution is an outdated document.”

Put aside, for a moment, political affiliation or personal beliefs. It doesn’t matter if you are a Democrat, Republican or Independent. It doesn’t matter if you support the invasion of Iraq or not. Despite our differences, the Constitution has stood for two centuries as the defining document of our government, the final source to determine — in the end — if something is legal or right.

Every federal official — including the President — who takes an oath of office swears to “uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia says he cringes when someone calls the Constitution a “living document.”

“Oh, how I hate the phrase we have — a ‘living document,’” Scalia says. “We now have a Constitution that means whatever we want it to mean. The Constitution is not a living organism, for Pete’s sake.”

As a judge, Scalia says, “I don’t have to prove that the Constitution is perfect; I just have to prove that it’s better than anything else.”

President Bush has proposed seven amendments to the Constitution over the last five years, including a controversial amendment to define marriage as a “union between a man and woman.” Members of Congress have proposed some 11,000 amendments over the last decade, ranging from repeal of the right to bear arms to a Constitutional ban on abortion.

Scalia says the danger of tinkering with the Constitution comes from a loss of rights.

“We can take away rights just as we can grant new ones,” Scalia warns. “Don’t think that it’s a one-way street.”

And don’t buy the White House hype that the USA Patriot Act is a necessary tool to fight terrorism. It is a dangerous law that infringes on the rights of every American citizen and, as one brave aide told President Bush, something that undermines the Constitution of the United States.

But why should Bush care? After all, the Constitution is just “a goddamned piece of paper.”

**“Every gun that is made, every warship that is launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.”**

**— President Dwight Eisenhower (1953)**

# Court Rejects Iowa Evangelical Prison Program

by Neela Banerjee, *The New York Times*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/03/us/03faith.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/03/us/03faith.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

submitted by: Virginia Fillingim

WASHINGTON, June 2 — A federal judge in Iowa ruled Friday that a state-financed evangelical Christian program to help inmates re-enter society was “pervasively sectarian” and violated the separation of church and state.

The decision has set the stage for an appeals process that is expected to explore more broadly the constitutionality of the Bush administration’s religion-based initiative programs, according to plaintiffs, defendants and legal experts.

Prison programs run by religious groups have increased over the last decade or so, as policy makers, prison and law enforcement officials and prisoner advocates have focused on the high rates of recidivism when inmates return to society, said Robert Tuttle, a law professor at George Washington University who is an expert on religion-based initiatives. Proponents of such programs in prisons have said that the transformative experience of religion can counter recidivism.

In April, the Justice Department announced plans to begin a religious-based program, offered in a single faith, in at least a half-dozen federal prisons, according to legal analysts and critics of the program.

The case was filed more than three years ago by Americans United for Separation of Church and State against the Iowa Department of Corrections and InnerChange Freedom Initiative, an organization affiliated with Prison Fellowship Ministries. Prison Fellowship was founded by Charles W. Colson, a close ally of President Bush and an influential evangelical who went to prison for his role in the Watergate cover-up.

In his ruling on Friday, Judge Robert W. Pratt, chief judge of the Federal District Court for the Southern District of Iowa, said he was not ruling on the efficacy of religious programs in rehabilitating inmates or “the ultimate truthfulness about religion.”

Instead, Judge Pratt ruled that the InnerChange program had violated the separation of church and state by using money from taxpayers to pay for a religious program, one that gave special privileges to inmates who accepted its evangelical Christian teachings and terms.

“What we had hoped to make clear was that InnerChange was pervasively religious, that it gave special benefits to inmates and that it sought to convert people to Christianity,” said Barry W. Lynn, executive director of

Americans United. “InnerChange denied that, but the judge backed us on all three points. It shows that government-funded religious programs don’t have a place in prisons.”

Judge Pratt said that the program had to be halted in 60 days and that InnerChange had to return about \$1.5 million it had received from the State of Iowa.

Those penalties, however, are pending an appeal, which InnerChange plans to file next week at the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in St. Louis, said Mark Earley, a former attorney general of Virginia who is president of Prison Fellowship.

“I think it is an extreme decision that if allowed to stand strikes a pretty serious blow at the religious freedom of prisoners,” Mr. Earley said. “And it strikes an equally destructive blow to rehabilitation efforts in the prisons of America.”

Mr. Earley said he expected the decision to be reversed on appeal, either at the Eighth Circuit or in the Supreme Court.

Both sides are banking on the possibility that this case could rise through levels of appeal and set precedent about religion-based initiatives, or more significantly, about the separation of church and state, legal experts said.

Douglas Laycock, professor of constitutional law at the University of Texas in Austin, said of InnerChange’s strategy: “I think they’re betting on getting to the Supreme Court and that Sam Alito and John Roberts will be there. And they’re betting that they have five votes to win.”

Mr. Earley said in a phone interview that anyone of any faith could participate in the program. On its Web site, however, InnerChange explains that it is “anchored in biblical teaching” and “Christ-centered.” It operates in six states, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri and Texas, Mr. Earley said. It is partly financed by the state in all but Texas and Arkansas, where it uses private money, he added.

Religious programs in prisons once used to be chaplaincy efforts and occasional visits by volunteers, but they have now grown into ambitious programs like InnerChange, Professor Tuttle said. He estimated that about 15 states had such programs.

# Evolution vs Intelligent Design Debate: Two CSS Members Weigh In

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**Mont Smith**

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I attended the mini-debate on Evolution vrs. Intelligent Design held at OSU last evening (May 22). Here are several immediate responses.

1. I was embarrassed for the obscurity, science-babble and dishonesty exhibited by Hunter, the advocate of ID. He refused to "join issue." He insisted that ID was not motivated by and did not involve religion. He claimed "rationalism" was biased. He redefined "empirical" as what is seen without the assumption of evolution. He did not define "intelligent" or "design." He avoided all talk of a "Designer." He denied that ID was part of a greater cultural war in the USA. He distanced himself from well known ID institutions and individuals whose views could be unfavorably quoted. He was exactly like the proponents of ID at Dover who were severely reprimanded by the judge in the case for their misrepresentations and lies about what ID really was: a religion pretending to be science.

2. I thought the advocate of evolution, Ruse, an Englishman with a heavy British accent, a professor in Florida, was good. Not excellent, but quite good. His clarity and great sense of humor won over the audience at once, even though the event was sponsored by a Christian campus group. He was cordial and pleasant. He failed completely to prioritize. He insisted on "evidence that can pass in a court of law." He claimed that ID was a "development of American Biblical literalism" and "is not only non-science, but poor religion." It cannot deal with the problem of evil, he said. I was disappointed that he let that matter go. The problem of evil is the greatest single problem ID and religion has. He sometimes pressed

Hunter (ID), but Hunter did not join issue. "What is the Intelligent designer? Who is he? What does he do on earth?" Hunter's response was that he was a Christian who believed the Bible. Ruse did not pick up on this. He did not want to appear to be attacking religion, I suppose.

3. My overall reaction was a mild disappointment. I thought that Ruse (the Englishman) was too cordial. He did not press Hunter. He did not demand an answer to the obvious question, "Is the designer, in fact, the God of the Bible?" This would have been answered "Yes," and would have cut the ground from under Hunter. But Ruse did not press it. He let Hunter's non-answers stand all but unchallenged. Ruse' great advantage was that there is so very much evidence of poor design, downright evil in the design, and incompetence in the execution of the design. Ruse did not press it. The designer is in fact a bungler. But Ruse did not press it. Nor did he ask, "Can this designer be influenced by humans, and if so how and by whom?" Katrina was not mentioned, the tsunami, murders inside a church, genetic horrors, and the terrible Pakistani earthquake were ignored. But they are exactly what should be answered by anyone claiming an intelligent designer. And finally, Ruse did not use the best question he had available, "Will you accept as fact (true) any statement or claim that contradicts the Bible?" That answer would have been, "No," and would have declared the Bible the judge of what could be factual in science. It would destroy science. This is what ID is all about. Everyone could have seen that. But he did not ask it. This failure is why Ruse was good but not excellent. Ah, well...

**"Just as the right to speak and the right to refrain from speaking are complementary components of a broader concept of individual freedom of mind, so also the individual's freedom to choose his own creed is the counterpart of his right to refrain from accepting the creed established by the majority. At one time it was thought that this right merely proscribed the preference of one Christian sect over another, but would not require equal respect for the conscience of the infidel, the atheist, or the adherent of a non-Christian faith such as Mohammedism or Judaism. But when the underlying principle has been examined in the crucible of litigation, the Court has unambiguously concluded that the individual freedom of conscience protected by the First Amendment embraces the right to select any religious faith or none at all."**

— Justice Stevens for the majority, *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, June 4, 1985.  
For more about the Jaffree case, see <http://ffrf.org/ftoy/1985.php>

## John Dearing

Monday evening's debate (May 22) at Oregon State University was "Intelligent Design v Evolution."

Cornelius Hunter, Ph.D., adjunct professor at evangelical Biola University, and member of the Discovery Institute, argued in favor of "intelligent design." Biola University, in La Mirada, California, describes itself as "A Global Center for Christian Thought and Spiritual Renewal."

Michael Ruse, Ph.D., Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University (FSU), argued for evolution. Professor Ruse is a prolific author and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. FSU is a comprehensive, national graduate research university with a distinguished faculty that includes two Nobel Laureates.

Hunter claimed that "Intelligent Design," or ID, is not the same as the religious belief of creationism. ID, however, requires there be an "Intelligent Designer," and, in everyday speech, Christians call this designer "God." Intelligent Design by an Intelligent Designer, then, is Creation by God. Hence Intelligent Design is creationism.

Ruse pointed out that evolution is not necessarily in conflict with religion, and that in fact many Christians accept evolution. How many atheists support "Intelligent Design"?

Predictably, Hunter's presentation consisted of criticisms of evolutionary theory. Yet even if valid, criticism of a theory does not establish another theory. He was asked twice to outline the current lines of research ID scientists are pursuing to establish their "theory." Of course he could offer none. Indeed, there are none. There is nothing to research!

Presenting ID (née creationism) as an alternative scientific theory of the origin of life is disingenuous at best: ID is a theory only in the everyday use of the term (meaning a guess, opinion, or belief), not in a scientific sense. In science, a theory is an explanation or model based on observation, experimentation, and reasoning that has been tested and confirmed as a general principle helping to explain and predict natural phenomena. The Theory of Evolution is our continually-refined explanation of how the fact of evolution works, just as the Theory of Flight is our explanation of how the fact of flight works. ID does not meet the definition of a scientific theory: it is not falsifiable, testable, alterable, etc.

Evidence shows that organisms arose from less complex organisms that lived before them. Complexity arises from lower levels of complexity. ID or creationism, in contrast, claims that the complexity of living organisms came from a greater complexity: "God". But where did this level of complexity come from — a still greater level of complexity ("Supergod")? And where did this level of complexity come from? This questioning could go on forever: hence

creation by "God" does not explain anything, and in fact is logically impossible. "Creationism" is a myth.

In the term, "intelligent design," "design" implies a designer. It also contains the word, "intelligent." But is the "design" (structure) of the human body "intelligent?" Just as mechanical machines are designed by human engineers, ID advocates argue that biological machines were designed by a supernatural engineer. How do these engineers compare?

A human engineer has limitations in intelligence, memory, time, and resources. Our machines are imperfect, often requiring modifications to make them better. (Over time, with modifications, they "evolve.") A supernatural designer, or "God", in contrast, has no limitations. "He" (by convention) is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omni benevolent (all-good). The designs of such a being of unlimited abilities must necessarily, then, be perfect. But is the human body perfect? No.

Humans are born with an appendix. It serves no known function, and people who have their appendix removed do perfectly well without it. Yet it can become infected and even burst, causing great pain and even death. In evolutionary theory, a part that has no present function is possible: it may be a remnant of something that once was useful. But why would a Perfect Designer put appendixes in people? No human engineer would put an unnecessary part in a machine, especially if its failure would cause the machine to fail! Hence the human body could not have been "designed." Therefore Intelligent Design is false.

Creationists are actually supporting creationism for religious reasons, not as a scientific theory. Henry Morris, head of the Institute for Creation Research, wrote: "The main reason for insisting on the Universal Flood as a fact of history and as the primary vehicle for geological interpretation is that God's Word plainly teaches it! No geological difficulties, real or imagined, can be allowed to take precedence over the clear statements and necessary inferences of Scripture." In science, one does not begin with one's conclusions, then attempt to find evidence for them, while ignoring evidence to the contrary.

Only science should be taught in science classes. Many people believe in astrology; some believe Earth is flat: yet we don't expect our science teachers to teach these pseudoscientific beliefs. Neither should we expect them to teach religious beliefs.

**The known is finite, the unknown is infinite; intellectually we stand on an islet in the midst of an illimitable ocean of inexplicability. Our business in every generation is to reclaim a little more land.**

— Thomas H. Huxley

# Bush's Intellectual Predecessors

When large numbers of men are unable to find work, unemployment results.  
— Calvin Coolidge

Things are more like they are now than they have ever been.  
— President Gerald Ford

The future will be better tomorrow.  
— Dan Quayle

The private enterprise system indicates that some people have higher incomes than others.  
— Gerry Brown

The world is more like it is now than it ever has before.  
— Dwight Eisenhower

You can't just let nature run wild.  
— Wally Hickel, former governor of Alaska

We shall reach greater and greater platitudes of achievement.  
— Richard J. Daley, Chicago Mayor

Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind.  
— General William Westmoreland, during the war in Viet Nam

When the President does it, that means that it is not illegal.  
— Nixon Whitehouse Tapes

For the supposed crimes of heresy and witchcraft, hundreds of women endured such persecutions and tortures that the most stolid historians are said to have wept in recording them; and no one can read them today but with a bleeding heart. And, as the Christian Church grew stronger, woman's fate grew more helpless.

Even the Reformation and Protestantism brought no relief, the clergy being all along their most bitter persecutors, the inventors of the most infernal tortures.

Hundreds and hundreds of fair young girls, innocent as the angels in heaven, hundreds and hundreds of old women, weary and trembling with the burdens of life, were hunted down by emissaries of the Church, dragged into the courts with the ablest judges and lawyers of England, Scotland and America on the bench, and tried for crimes that never existed but in the wild, fanatical imaginations of religious devotees. Women were accused of consorting with devils and perpetuating their diabolical propensities. Hundreds of these children of hypothetical origin were drowned, burned, and tortured in the presence of their mothers, to add to their death agonies.

These things were not done by savages or pagans: they were done by the Church. Neither were they confined to the Dark Ages, but permitted by law in England far into the eighteenth century. The clergy everywhere sustained witchcraft as Bible doctrine, until the spirit of rationalism laughed the whole thing to scorn, and science gave mankind a more cheerful view of life.

— Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Christian Church and Women." The Index, Boston, c., 1888.

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