

THE ATHEIST VOICE

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Stark Statement: Congressman says he has no belief in 'Supreme Being'

Rob Boston
AMERICANS UNITED

A milestone in American politics was reached when U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) stated that he has no belief in a supreme being.

Stark is the highest-ranking public official to come out of the closet as a non-believer. His emergence came about after the Secular Coalition for America, a Washington group that lobbies on behalf of non-religious Americans, sponsored a contest to find elected officials who openly hold no belief in God.

Stark's name was among 47 placed in nomination, and he agreed to a public airing of his views.

"When the Secular Coalition asked me to complete a survey on my religious beliefs, I indicated I am a Unitarian who does not believe in a supreme being," Stark said. "Like our nation's founders,

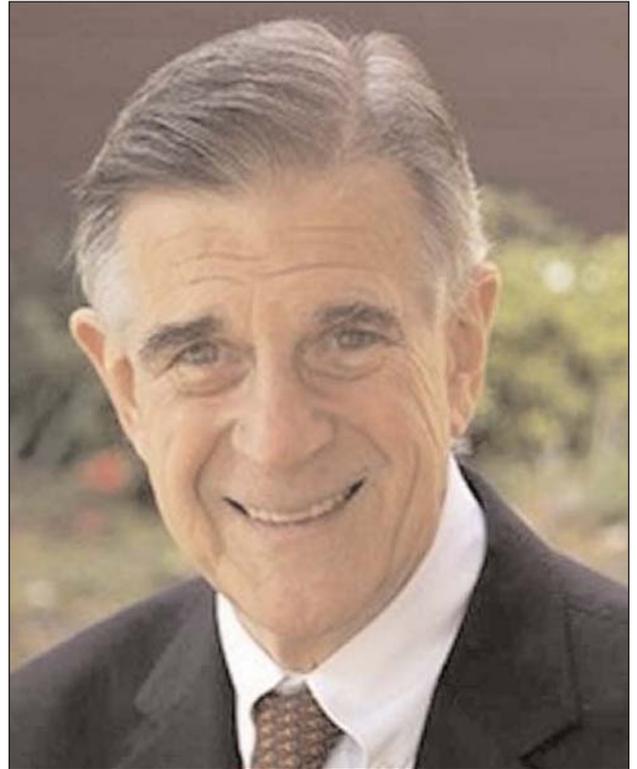
I strongly support the separation of church and state. I look forward to working with the Secular Coalition to stop the promotion of narrow religious beliefs in science, marriage contracts, the military and the provision of social services."

Stark has been in Congress since 1973 and currently serves as chairman of the Health Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee.

A recent USA Today poll showed that 53 percent of those polled said they would not vote for an atheist, even if they otherwise liked the candidate's views. But Stark, who has been in office a long time and represents a liberal district, said he does not think his non-belief will be an issue.

"I don't know what relevance my opinion on a supreme being would

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House.gov

U.S. Rep Pete Stark is the highest ranking official to state no belief in a supreme being.

SOCAS

GA 'Evolution' Disclaimer lawsuit settled

AMERICANS UNITED

The Cobb County Georgia Public School Board has agreed to settle the long-running legal fracas over its 2002 decision to place anti-evolution stickers in high school biology textbooks.

In an agreement announced today, Cobb County school officials state that they will not order the placement of "any stickers, labels, stamps, inscriptions, or other warnings or disclaimers bearing language substantially similar to that used on the sticker that is the subject of this action." School officials also agreed not to take other actions that would undermine the teaching

of evolution in biology classes.

"Cobb County school officials have taken the right step to ensure that their students receive a quality education," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "Students should be taught sound science, and the curriculum should not be altered at the behest of aggressive religious groups."

After the Cobb County School Board passed the sticker policy, school district parents, represented by attorney Michael Manely and the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, sued arguing that the policy promoted religion in science classrooms and therefore violated the separation

of church and state. In early 2005, U.S. District Judge Clarence Cooper agreed and ordered the school district to remove the stickers from its 35,000 biology textbooks.

The textbook disclaimer declares that evolution is a controversial scientific theory.

Since federal courts have ruled that creationism is religion and cannot be taught in public school science courses, Religious Right groups have sought ways to undermine the teaching of evolution and sneak discussion of religious beliefs on the origins of life into public school science courses. Textbook disclaimers on evolution, are one such tactic.

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THE BACKSIDE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Been Getting Warmer for a While

ED WALLACE

Lately there's been a lot of talk about global warming, and how it will change the world over the next hundred years. Moreover, according to reports, this change will be dramatic, and not for the better. It may alter our ability to live on the planet.

Hey great stuff, but the fact is, global warming has already taken place, and if it weren't for the fact that not that long ago our planet was much cooler than it is today, America might not have even been founded. And immigration from Europe certainly wouldn't have been as successful as it was.

How do we know this? Simple, out there in academia there's a group of individuals called historical climatologists. That is, historians who compare events in history to the world's known climate changes during the period being studied.

A good example of climate change in history is the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Of course today that area is one big desert, but at the time of the rise of civilization in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, things were much different. It wasn't a desert at all. In fact, it was quite lush and fertile.

Another point; anthropologists have wondered for years why mankind in the year 1,000 was almost identical to us in size and bulk. But, for the period of 1200 to 1700 mankind actually shrank in size, our past few generations having now reversed those genetic patterns.

The answer lies in the fact that our world went through a period known as the Little Ice Age. And it lasted from 1200 to 1850 and may have been the primary reason why this country was discovered and settled. We know this to be a fact by studying ice cores taken from the North and South Poles, along with examining tree rings for chemicals in the atmosphere and rainfall totals year by year. Additionally, during this same period a great deal was written on the subject of weather conditions that still exists to this day.

Combined we have a remarkably clear

vision of the world's temperatures over the last 1,000 years, and it's a story you never hear.

A good example: In the year 1,000, we know that the mean average temperature in Europe during their summers was fully 3 degrees hotter than it is today. But that was a good thing. You see, that's how the Norsemen were able to navigate the North Atlantic and settle both Greenland and Iceland, just before the end of the First Millennium.

In fact, the planet was so warm that Leif Erickson sailed west to discover Vinland, or modern day Labrador in North America. Why? Because the North Atlantic wasn't near as cold, ice laden, or dangerous as it is in modern times. Moreover, the name Vinland is translated as Wine Land, named for the many varieties of grapes found there. Of course, grapes no longer grow in Labrador; it's just too cold.

During that same period, England negotiated a treaty with France over the sale of British wine. That's right.

The planet was much warmer then than it is today, and British wine was considered better than French wine.

It too is no longer made, because it's too cold for grapes to properly grow in England.

The 12th and 13th centuries gave us massive and beautiful architecture, such as the Notre Dame Cathedral in

Paris. A celebration to God for all the bountiful harvests and the health of the planet and its people.

Then, without warning, the planet suddenly turned cold; the Little Ice Age had begun. Norsemen recorded that they had problems sailing from Iceland as early as 1203. A problem they had never had before.

In England, the Thames River started freezing each winter, and the shorter growing season led to massive famines. Edward the Second (whom you remember as Longshanks' gay son in Braveheart) levied taxes on livestock and forbade the making of ale from grain, as it was needed for bread. None of those measures worked. Even Edward had a hard time keeping bread in

his palace, and he was King.

Throughout Europe there were many small farm owners, but with the continuously cold weather, they found they couldn't bring in enough of a harvest to feed their own families, much less pay taxes and keep their properties. It was during this period that many nobles took those farms as their own property for non-payment for taxes, forcing families to remain as tenant farmers or seek shelter in the larger cities.

Things became so bad that by the year 1300, the average life expectancy was down to 24 years, and that's if you survived childbirth.

The summers were short and wet, the winters brutally cold; and it would remain this way for the next 550 years. Glaciers expanded their range around the world, including in this country. When the Black Plague came to Europe it wiped out so many people mostly because they no longer lived on farms insulated from the disease. Now they were crowded into slums and therefore were more susceptible to infection.

By the 1500s, Britain was a country kept alive by the Atlantic Cod, which often replaced the produce that was always in short supply. (Cod being the perfect protein food.)

Now we know that cod are very sensitive to freezing waters; their kidneys won't function much below 37 degrees, but the fish thrive between that temperature and 50 degrees. At first British ships found cod near Greenland and along the same Labrador coast discovered by Leif Erickson. But by 1600 the fish no longer existed there. Too cold. Instead British sea captains now found the cod to the south, along what would one day be the New England Coast.

Cape Cod was given its name on May 15th, 1602, by Bartholomew Gosnold, the captain of the British ship Concord, during a fishing expedition. He named that hooked Massachusetts peninsula Cape Cod to let other British fishing ships easily find where the fish were schooling. He also sailed farther south and named an island where he was successful fishing after his

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wife, who had just given birth. That name also is with us today: Martha's Vineyard.

And it was because of those horrible situations in Europe due to cold weather that so many immigrants came to this country. It wasn't a pioneering spirit in most cases; it was just a chance to survive. Many early immigrants who couldn't afford to buy farms in Europe came here simply for the free land. At least they could attempt to grow something on it to feed their families.

In fact, that may have been a mistake also.

The Roanoke Colonists were last seen on August 22, 1587; today their fate is still a mystery. But it's no mystery to a climatologist: The 1580s were the driest period on the East Coast in almost 800 years. They just couldn't grow anything due to the drought.

Jamestown too was settled in this period of brutal cold and not much rain. Of the original 104 settlers, only 38 were alive a year later. Many descended to cannibalism in order to survive at all.

It didn't get any better: From 1607 to 1625, another 6,000 individuals came to Jamestown, and 4,800 of them died. New England had it better. Not that it was any less cold, but they had cod in their harbors and adopted from the Indians the techniques to survive the harsh elements.

In 1664 a Somerset clergyman, Richard Eburne, told his followers that the only chance they had of surviving the elements was to go to America. Over the next few years, 16,000 people from around Somerset County took his advice.

Does anyone remember Washington's winter at Valley Forge? Three months of non-stop snow and freezing temperatures? Again, the Little Ice Age in action.

1816 was known as the year without summer, both here and in Europe. It was caused by the interaction of the Little Ice Age with the volcanic eruption of Tambora in Java the year before. (Tambora's explosion was 100 times greater than the Mount St.

Helens eruption, 21 years ago.) Harvard measured the temperatures for June of 1816 and found they averaged only 64 degrees.

The Erie Canal was built in 1817 because New York needed a reliable way to transport food. The decision was forced on them by the bad weather that had made roads impassable in 1816, or the year without summer.

And yes, the Irish potato famine in the 1840s was caused by, you guessed it, the Little Ice Age. Way too cold in the winter, too wet in the short summer growing season, and the potato plague quickly spread, ruining the entire potato crop. A million died, a half million came to America. And we welcome the Irish listening today.

Then in 1850, again without warning, the planet started warming up again. The Thames no longer froze over in the winter, and the London winter festival was canceled. Farmers in America could grow more food and feed more people, and for a short period they prospered.

By 1933 the Atlantic Ocean had warmed up enough that cod could once again be found off the coast of Greenland. And immigration from the British Isles declined dramatically. They no longer needed to come to America; they could survive in their own country.

If you recall, the second wave of immigration came from the Baltics, Germany and Italy; they were escaping poverty and corrupt monarchs.

Today the temperature of the planet is 4½ degrees warmer than at the height of the Little Ice Age; we are still 3 degrees colder than in the year 1,000.

But if it hadn't been for that period of time when the planet was cold, the British wouldn't have found cod off of New England, which is why the Pilgrims and Puritans came here. The Irish wouldn't have come en masse, and Washington wouldn't have had that brutal winter at Valley Forge. But from 1850 the planet got a whole lot warmer, and America took off. People came here to escape the cold, and America prospered from global warming. Global warming from the 1850s on.

SOCAS

Bible Verdict: School board shuns flawed 'Bible Course'

Jeremy Leaming

AMERICANS UNITED

A Michigan school district yesterday evening decided to forgo a controversial Bible course authored by a Religious Right group.

At a public meeting, the Howell Public Schools Board of Education considered but did not vote on a Bible elective being pushed by a parent and Religious Right activists. Wendy Day, a Howell school board member, made a motion to adopt the Bible course, but couldn't get a second from any of the board's six other members.

The course was created by the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, a Religious Right organization that claims the U.S. Constitution is based on biblical precepts.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State urged Howell school officials not to implement the course. In the Jan. 5 letter, Americans United Litigation Counsel Aram A. Schvey noted that the Council founder, Elizabeth Ridenour,

is a Religious Right activist who has said that her group's agenda is "to expose the kids to the biblical Christian worldview."

Schvey also wrote that it is constitutionally suspect for public schools to offer courses that focus "solely or even predominantly on the Bible."

At yesterday's meeting, Hal Downs, president of the Michigan chapter of Americans United, also argued against adoption of the course. The Press & Argus, a Livingston, Mich., daily reported that Downs noted that it was not the business of public schools to teach religion. Religion is harmed, Downs said, when government meddles with it.

Valerie Webster, a Howell public schools parent, also spoke against the proposal.

"I attend church three times a week," she said, "but I don't think school is the right place to teach Bible study." The Detroit News reported.

Ridenour's group, which is allied with Religious Right outfits such as the American Family Association and the Alliance Defense Fund, has spent years pressuring public school officials from coast to coast

to adopt its curriculum. The group claims its course is constitutional, even though a federal judge in Florida ruled otherwise in 1998.

An American Family Association representative appeared before the Howell school board yesterday and attacked it for being hostile to religion. Gary Glenn, the Livingston newspaper reported, claimed that the overwhelming majority of public school districts that consider Ridenour's Bible course approve it. He said the Howell board would be "among the fringe element" if it failed to follow suit.

Ridenour also likes to claim that her curriculum is used widely across the country, but she refuses to provide the public with names of the school districts that supposedly use her course.

The Howell public school officials who refused to adopt Ridenour's Bible course should be commended for not falling for far-fetched claims that their school district is obliged to teach a Bible course created by a group with a blatant Religious Right agenda.

Lawsuit – From page 1

School officials removed the stickers, but asked the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reverse Judge Cooper's *Selman v. Cobb County School District* decision. In late spring, the appellate panel sent the case back to Cooper requesting more information about the situation.

Americans United, Bondurant, Mixon & Elmore, an Atlanta law firm, and Pepper Hamilton, a Philadelphia law firm, joined the ACLU of Georgia in handling the case on remand.

Jeffrey Selman, the Cobb County parent who led the charge against the anti-evolution disclaimer and president of the Georgia chapter of Americans United, said the settlement puts to rest a contentious struggle over religious and political agendas.

"The settlement brings to an end a long battle to keep our science classes free of political or religious agendas," Selman said. "I am very pleased that the Cobb

school board has dropped its defense of the anti-evolution policy. The board should be commended for taking this action."

Richard Katskee, assistant legal director of Americans United, and Eric Rothschild of Pepper Hamilton were among the attorneys who successfully argued against a Pennsylvania public school district's policy of promoting "intelligent design" in science courses. In 2005, a federal judge ruled that intelligent design is not science and that the Dover Area School Board's policy violated the First Amendment principle of church-state separation.

Some of the experts who were instrumental in persuading the federal court to invalidate the intelligent-design policy also joined the effort to persuade Cobb County school officials to abandon their defense of the anti-evolution stickers. Those experts include Kenneth Miller, a biology professor at Brown University, Brian Alters, a professor of science education at McGill

University, and Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education.

Americans United's Katskee applauded the Cobb County School Board's decision to settle the legal dispute.

"The school district can now place its focus squarely on providing a sound education to Cobb County students," he said.

Katskee added that Cobb County officials showed "great courage" in deciding to end the ongoing and often contentious battle, which has attracted national attention.

"Cobb County students can be thankful that their school board is working in their interests," he said. "The board has chosen an admirable course of action by dropping its defense of the evolution disclaimer."

Rothschild said he is pleased the Cobb County School Board chose not "to continue waging a prolonged court battle over an attack on evolution."

BOOK REVIEW

Christmas Story H. L. Mencken

William McEwen
METROPLEX ATHEISTS

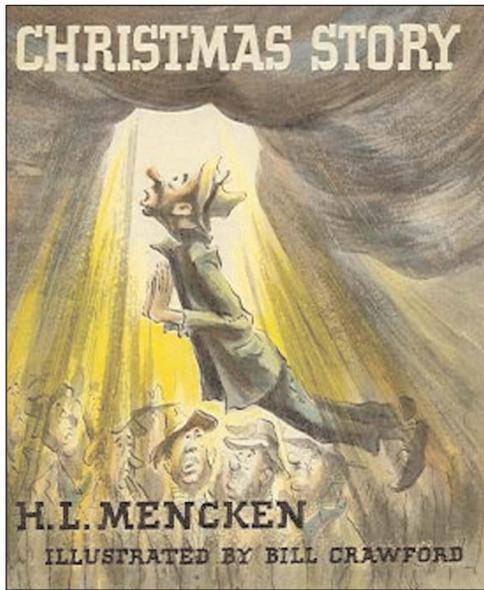
At first glance, Christmas Story has the appearance of a children's book. It is small and thin, and it contains great illustrations. But H. L. Mencken's story is a fun romp meant for grownups.

Christmas Story is the tale of Fred Ammermeyer, a Baltimore infidel or "freethinker," as they prefer to be called, the author explains. Fred is our kind of guy, making no apologies for unbelief, and stirring things up among religious people. For example, Fred sends copies of Thomas Paine's Age of Reason to all local clergy "three or four times a year - always disguised as a special delivery or registered letter marked urgent."

Fred decides to throw a Christmas bash for the local bums. This will be unlike the

usual holiday charity meals sponsored by others, because there will be no sermon, no songs, and no confessions. Turkey, beer, and cigars will be in plenty supply.

The party begins at 11 a.m. on Christmas day. It gets off to a grand start, and grows bigger and bigger with food, more food, cigars, more cigars, beer, and more beer. The story is a quick and fun read, and the ending's surprise twist is open for interpretation.



The story originally appeared as "Stare Decisis" in the New Yorker magazine in 1944, and this book

was printed in 1946. The illustrations, by Bill Crawford, are lively and beautifully reproduced.

The original first edition of Christmas Story is available in the Metroplex Atheists library.

Stark – From page 1

have on Medicare policy," he told Inside Bay Area, a local newspaper. "I suppose, if you believe in faith healers."

Even a local evangelical minister downplayed the matter.

"I commend him for being public about his real feelings," said Kevin Hom, associate pastor at Fremont Community Church.

The U.S. Congress is increasingly diverse. This is a good thing because it means that body more accurately reflects the great diversity of our nation.

This year, there are Buddhists in the ranks, as well as the first Muslim member. Stark is probably not the first non-believer in the House - he's just the first to admit it.

"We hope that this will help break stereotypes that one needs to believe in a supreme being to lead an ethical and exemplary life," said Lori Lipman Brown, the Secular Coalition's director.

Here's hoping it will also remind people that there can be no religious test for public office in America. At the end of the day, all that should matter to the voters in California's 13th District is how well Rep. Stark is doing his job - not where and if he goes to religious services.

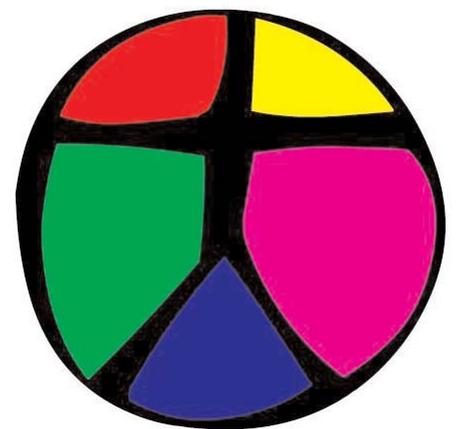


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SOCAS

'Ten Commandments' monument derailed - for now

Lauren Smith
AMERICANS UNITED

Monumental Issue: Saginaw Derails Ten Commandments Monument - For Now
March 15th 2007

Citizens of Saginaw County, Mich., won't be forced to face the Ten Commandments when doing business at the County Government Center. Not yet, at least.

County Commissioner Patrick Wurtzel failed on Tuesday to persuade his colleagues on the County Services Committee that a granite monument of the Decalogue should be added to a "Freedom Shrine" in the center's lobby. The building houses most of the county's government offices, including the circuit court, the juvenile detention center and the sheriff's office.

Wurtzel's plan failed in committee on a 3 to

3 vote. The tally was in keeping with the advice of their attorney that putting a religious monument in the county courthouse could cause significant legal problems. Wurtzel will bring the issue before the entire Board of Commissioners on March 27.

Wurtzel's story has a slightly different twist, because in this case, the government is actually standing up for what the Constitution requires. Commissioners won't pull an end-run around the Constitution by allowing him to foot the bill, either. Wurtzel believes that if he pays for the monument, that the government will be off the First Amendment hook. Not quite.

The Ten Commandments are more than ten suggested rules to keep in mind; they are unquestionably religious mandates. According to the biblical account, they come to us straight from the hand of God. Proponents

of their (state-sanctioned) public display argue that the Decalogue's influence on Western law should be recognized.

But this argument is disingenuous. The Decalogue, in today's context, is a weapon in the so-called "culture wars." The Religious Right has transformed the Commandments into a potent symbol of Christian supremacy and, ergo, a symbol of the inferior status of non-Christians in the political and legal spheres.

It is absolutely inappropriate for any government to send this message to its citizens. Whether the government pays for it or not, the monument has no place in building equally owned by every Saginaw resident. The law doesn't, and shouldn't, banish religious expression to the basement, but it does require public property to be neutral ground.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Violent Christian video game promotes bigotry

AMERICAN ATHEISTS

A new video game targeting conservative Christians promotes intolerance and demonizes Atheists and other nonbelievers, gays, and even members of minority religious groups an Atheist civil rights organization warned today.

Based on the "Left Behind" series of apocalyptic novels, the game has been distributed to over 10,000 retail locations including Wal-Mart, just in time for the holiday season. Dubbed "Left Behind: Eternal Forces," the action is set in New York City where a Christian militia is engaged in bloody combat with "bad guys" who refuse to accept Jesus. Despite earlier

protests from civic and even religious groups, the company behind this intolerant video fare defends the game as "inspirational entertainment."

Ellen Johnson, President of American Atheists, said that everything from the content to the marketing of "Left Behind" takes the game to a new and possibly dangerous level.

"There are plenty of violent and racy video games out there in the market, but 'Left Behind' conveys a message of intolerance." Johnson added that players score points for "blowing away" their heretical opponents, and that points scored for "unnecessary killing" can be redeemed by prayer.

"In a time when our nation and the rest of

the world desperately need to stress tolerance, this game - targeted at a vulnerable segment of our community, namely, young people - preaches that violence is acceptable as long as Jesus or some religious figure demands its use."

Dave Silverman, Communications Director for the group said that American Atheists was NOT advocating censorship of "Left Behind" or any other controversial video game. "We're not asking the government or retailers to ban this game. Parents, though, should use the church-centered marketing of this as an opportunity to talk to young people about good judgement, acceptance of others, and the need for tolerance - not violence."

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SOCAS

Commandments display sends message of religious intolerance

AMERICANS UNITED

Haskell County Display Is Divisive And Should Be Removed, Insists Church-State Watchdog Group

Religious Right organizations are using governmental displays of the Ten Commandments to project a message of religious exclusion and intolerance, Americans United for Separation of Church and State has told a federal appeals court.

Observes the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, "The Religious Right is using a sacred religious symbol as a weapon in the culture war. It's demeaning to religion, deeply divisive in a diverse nation and clearly unconstitutional."

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed with the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Americans United attorneys trace the Religious Right's use of the Commandments and explain how the symbol has been appropriated to wage war against religious diversity.

AU argues that officials in Haskell

County, Okla., violated the constitutional separation of church and state by erecting a Commandments monument in front of the county courthouse in November of 2004. A federal district court upheld the display, and the case is now on appeal.

The AU brief demonstrates that the Commandments have become a flashpoint for Religious Right activism in recent years and that the Decalogue's display on public property in recent times is often part of a Religious Right-led crusade to assert Christian dominance.

"Against this historical backdrop, contemporary displays of the Ten Commandments convey to the public a different message than displays erected 50, 40, 30, or even 20 years ago," asserts Americans United. "After a decade-long campaign to reclaim America from religious heterogeneity, the Christian Right has transformed the Commandments into a potent symbol of Christian supremacy and ergo, a symbol of the inferior status of non-Christians in the political and legal spheres."

The brief discusses several high-profile

legal and political battles over the display of the Commandments, including former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore's losing crusade to display a 2.5-ton Commandments monument at the state judicial building in Montgomery.

Moore's display, Americans United asserts, was no mere recognition of the Ten Commandments' influence on the law. Rather, it was "intended to affirm the truth of the belief that divine law supersedes civil law, by conveying a message to the public that Christianity and Christian law (in the form of the Decalogue) reigns supreme not just over the American legal system, but also over all other religions."

The AU brief in *Green v. Board of County Commissioners of the County of Haskell* points out that the display has increased community rancor. A county commissioner hung up on one woman who called to complain, saying he does not speak to non-Christians. At a pro-Commandments rally, a local pastor implied that foes of the display would be lynched if they dared speak out.

WWII & Korea:
James Hardwick (Ret), Navy

Korea:
Chris Gregory, Air Force

Iraq:
Brian McIntosh (Ret), Marines
Shawn Ruzek, Marines
Deanne Dice

To the 'Atheists in foxholes' proudly serving the United States:
Thank you for your unselfish sacrifice so that we may all live in a safer world.

www.atheistfoxholes.org

RATIONALLY SPEAKING

First the 'vagina', now the 'scrotum'

Massimo Pigliucci Ph.D.
ATHEIST ALLIANCE

Well, a few days ago the V-word got into trouble in Florida because some pious idiot objected to children knowing the names of their body parts. Now we are at it again, but this time it's the scrotum, and the controversy is nationwide.

Susan Patron is a public librarian in Los Angeles, hardly the revolutionary stereotype, you'd think. She wrote a novel for children aged 9-12, "The Higher Power of Lucky," which was lucky (or, actually, good) enough to win the prestigious Newbery award. As a result, a book that had an initial run of 10,000 copies got quickly reprinted to 100,000 in anticipation of the typical demand that schools and libraries put forth for winners of the Newbery.

But not so fast. Many of the same schools and libraries have banned, or are considering banning, *The Higher Power* because the main character, a 10-year old girl, comes across the unthinkable word at one point of the story. She says: "Scrotum sounded to Lucky like something green that comes up when you have a flu and cough too much, it sounded medical and secret, but also important." Which makes sense within the context of the story, where our heroine is preparing to grow up, and in the process learning about body parts - as any healthy individual who is not blinded by stupid religious prudishness ought to do.

But Dana Nillson, a not uncommonly

unenlightened teacher and librarian in Durango, Colorado, claims that "this book included what I call a Howard Stern-type shock treatment," obviously having no idea what a Stern-type treatment is really about (perhaps Howard would be so kind as to give her a demonstration?). Another painful example of narrow mindedness is offered by Andrea Koch, an elementary school librarian in Brighton, New York, who - fearful of complaints from parents - said "I don't think our teachers, or myself, want to do that vocabulary lesson." Really? So, what exactly are you and your teachers there for, other than babysitting?

As one might imagine, the controversy has broadened to the proper role of teachers and librarians and the criteria they use to chose what to teach and read to our kids. The question, of course, is not that no restrictions should be applied by educators to what our kids are exposed to. Education is about presenting the best of what's out there, and - more importantly - about giving students the tools to make up their mind about what is trash and what is worth reading. But a book that wins the Newbery is not trash, it is in fact part of the best of what's out there, and shielding children from talk about body parts is an irresponsible abnegation of our duties as adults.

In fact, here is a good example of an educational use of the word "scrotum," this one probably not for children, borrowed from Jon Stewart. A bit more than a year ago Stewart ran a four-episode special of

his Daily Show on the controversy surrounding so-called "Intelligent Design theory" (another bit of religious nonsense to which way too many of our children are in fact exposed by well meaning teachers and librarians). As part of the "Evolution, Schmevolution" series, Stewart convened a panel of experts, including William Dembski, a pseudo-intellectual proponent of ID. At one point Stewart turned to Dembski and said: "Let me ask you this: Intelligent Design, the scrotum, the most painful part of my body. This intelligent designer chose to put it in a bag that anyone can walk across and hit with a baseball bat." To which the dumbfounded Dembski could simply mumble that "ID is not committed to every aspect of reality being the result of intelligence." You ain't kidding, Bill.

But I'm sure the Daily Show is as controversial among puritans as vaginas and scrotums are. Which reminds me of the immortal words by H.L. Mencken: "Puritanism. The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy." Or educated.

Massimo Pigliucci Ph.D. is a professor of Ecology and Evolution at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and is known as an outspoken critic of creationism and advocate of science education. He received his doctorate in genetics at the University of Ferrara, Italy, a Ph.D. in botany from the University of Connecticut, and a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Tennessee.



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Nuts in the news

DENVER, CO

AIG Life Insurance Company filed a federal lawsuit accusing a prominent Denver minister and four of his affiliated church groups of obtaining hundreds of thousands of dollars by filing fraudulent claims on behalf of parishioners. It is alleged that Pastor Acen Phillips and other defendants obtained a group-life insurance policy on behalf of up to 316 people and falsified paperwork to ensure that the bulk of any claims payments would go to them, not surviving family members of those who were covered.

The insurance company paid seven claims filed in 2005 and 2006 for \$640,000, more than half of which went to Phillips and the other defendants, the lawsuit said. The defendants have filed five other claims seeking \$450,000, half of which would go to the defendants, the lawsuit said.

Phillips also is under investigation by the Colorado Attorney General's office, said spokesman Nate Strauch. He would not comment on the nature of the investigation.

BENTON HARBOR, MI

Reverend Edward Pinkney is accused of election fraud by using cash and other methods to sway voters in a 2005 recall election. Pinkney's first trial ended with a hung jury. He has filed a motion claiming Berrien County's jury selection process lacks representation by minorities, but that motion was denied.

CENTERVILLE, AL

Reverend Earnest Stokes was charged with murdering his wife and was being held on \$750,000 bond when his congregation rallied

to raise money to get him released by putting up their property as collateral. However, Stokes returned to jail because one member reconsidered and withdrew their property.

KIEV, UKRAINE

A man shouting that God would keep him safe was mauled to death by a lion in the Kiev zoo. The man entered the animal's enclosure and shouted "God will save me, if he exists", while lowering himself by a rope into the enclosure. One lion knocked him down and severed his carotid artery. He was pronounced dead on the scene.

LAS VEGAS, NV

Rev. George Chaanine has pleaded not guilty to charges he beat and sexually assaulted a female soloist at a parish office. His accuser, a former Las Vegas Strip singer and church employee, said the priest hit her in the head with a wine bottle, groped and choked her until she began praying and he suddenly stopped and fled.

Chaanine has been suspended with pay from his job as parish administrator, but the Diocese of Las Vegas is not paying for his defense. He faces life in prison if convicted.

COVINGTON, KY

A grand jury has indicted Thomas Gaeke,

a Catholic Priest, on leave from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on charges he possessed cocaine and drug paraphernalia.

He faces up to five years in prison if convicted on the charges.

FT. PIERCE, FL

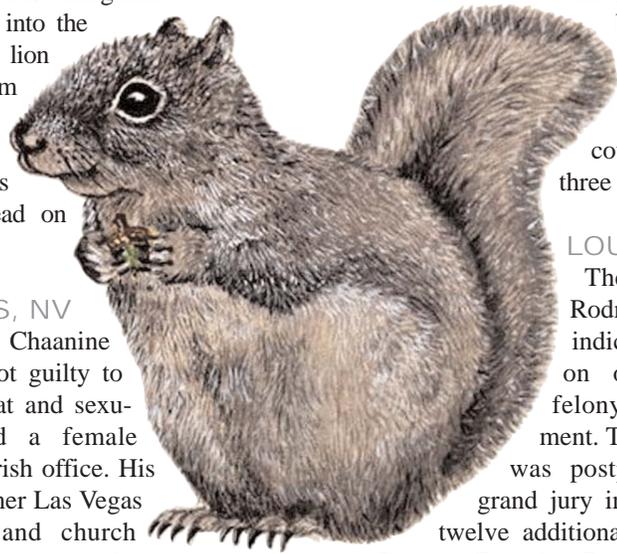
A man who admitted setting one church on fire, and burning a second one to the ground, to get back at God will be spending the rest of his life behind bars. A jury convicted Henry Drevermann on all 15 counts related to three church fires.

LOUISA, VA

The Reverend Rodney Rodis was indicted in January on one count of felony embezzlement. The arraignment was postponed after a grand jury indicted him on twelve additional charges. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond has said Rodis embezzled more than 600-thousand dollars from two churches where he served as pastor.

PAPUA, NEW GUINEA

Steven Tari, an elusive cult leader who calls himself "Black Jesus" has been arrested in the jungles New Guinea. It is alleged Tari is responsible for sacrificial killings, rape and the murder of people who opposed his movement.



***Metroplex Atheists:
No fire and
brimstone required***
www.metroplexatheists.org

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Atheist speaks to TCU religious student group

William McEwen
METROPLEX ATHEISTS

Metroplex Atheists was recently asked to speak to Chi Delta Mu, the religious organization for students and faculty at Texas Christian University. Here is a transcript of the speech, delivered by Metroplex Atheist member William McEwen, on March 5.

Introduction:

Our speaker today is William McEwen. He is a writer and photographer in Grand Prairie. He has two Christian daughters and a Christian ex-wife. He writes frequently for the Metroplex Atheists newsletter, "The Atheist Voice," and he writes for the organization's press releases. He was a Christian for the first 20 years of his life, an agnostic for the next 10, and now, in his 40s, he is an unwavering atheist. He has a Catholic girlfriend whose mom thinks he is a Presbyterian.

William McEwen:

Thank you, Erika. I'm not here to challenge anyone's beliefs. I'm not here to convert you. And it's not my intention to upset you or make you uncomfortable, although that might happen. And I'm going to talk about Christianity more than any other religion only because that's been my religion for much of my life. I was a Presbyterian for probably a lot longer than most of you have been alive.

What is an Atheist?

Let's talk about what an atheist is. An atheist is a person who doesn't believe in a god, or in a greater ultimate reality, or perhaps someone who just lives his life that way. We atheists are known by other names, that includes freethinker, humanist, bright. Bright, a few years ago, was a silly attempt by some people to come up with a name other than atheist that didn't have a stigma attached to it. It's caught on a little bit, but not with the majority of us.

I'm sure you're aware we're also known as infidels, heathens, and that sort of thing.

The studies that are done consistently show that atheists represent about 10 percent of the community. So when you go out in public, movies, the grocery store, whatever, proba-

bly one in 10 people you see is an atheist.

There are also people you probably know well who have not told you they're atheists. We tend to keep it quiet. We have relatives that don't know we're atheists, and we have no reason to want to upset them.

We're normal people with jobs and children. We pay taxes. And believe it or not, most of us celebrate Christmas.

How do we become atheists? I believe we're all born atheists. I think we're taught to believe things. I'm a parent, and I can certainly attest to the fact that newborns are nothing more than little blobs that eat and cry and poop a lot. We learn about religion just as we learn about everything else.

Just like me, most of the atheists I know were Christians for a very long time. I think the biggest misconception about atheists is that we turned from believer to non-believer in the flash of an instant, a cataclysmic moment when god let us down. That's not true.

Every atheist I know almost without exception will tell you they were a Christian or they practiced another religion for a long time and the move from believer to non-believer was gradual. For most of us it was a long process.

It's been pointed out that most of us who are Christians became Christians in a group. But every atheist I know became an atheist alone. Most atheists I know are former Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, etc. Many atheists were active in their churches, very active. Sometimes during our social meetings we're joined by ministers, there's one who is a former Baptist minister.

I know a man who became an atheist during his second year at Catholic seminary. His mother was not happy with this turn of events. She went from being proud of him to being very disappointed.

Another member of Metroplex Atheists tells me that despite the promises of prayer, it never brought him results. That's what turned him to atheism. Many atheists will tell you that after reading the bible thoroughly, that's what turned them into an atheist.

Coming Out

There is a danger in coming out as an athe-

ist. As I said before, many of us have people close to us that have no idea we're atheists. Saying you're an atheist is a good way to sever a relationship with someone you love.

All of us have stories about how being an atheist has harmed us in some way. One of our members is a licensed therapist. He was ready to sign a \$100,000 contract with a local school district to provide therapy to students. One day someone noticed he had a Darwin fish on the back of his car, have you seen the Darwin fish? It's like the Christian fish, but this one has legs on it. He lost the contract for that reason.

Another member lost her job. It wasn't a religious organization, but she was fired because she was an atheist.

My Own Journey

I'm going to tell you a little about my own journey, because I know that one the best. I was raised a Presbyterian. I guess you can blame college for the fact that I'm an atheist today. I took a couple of religion courses and it opened up the world to me. I saw all the varying beliefs people had, and I found myself comparing it to Greek mythology which is something that we all learned in grade school.

I doubted for a very long time and I wanted to believe. I felt ashamed when I realized I didn't believe. Christianity did stay in my life. My kids are very rebellious. They're Christians.

Are you familiar with the singing group Jump5? Some of you are? Their music is geared toward pre-teens. I loved listening to Jump5. These were very nice guys, they had the best musicians in Nashville, it was great music. As my kids got older, they didn't like Jump 5 any more. They were at Celebrate Freedom last summer, you know what Celebrate Freedom is with all the musical acts? My girls didn't even want to see Jump5. Later on, my daughters' mother saw one of the Jump5 bandmember's mothers, and said, "I can't believe it, my kids are too old for Jump5."

And the woman said, "You know what? I think Jump5 is too old for Jump5."

Now they listen to a band called UnderOath. Do you know UnderOath? Even if your kids listen to religious music, as a

father you can still tell them, “Your music is noise!” I found myself turning into my dad.

Organized Atheism

As I mentioned, atheists are about 10 percent of the population, but they’re not particularly organized. Ellen Johnson is the president of American Atheists. I saw her give a speech in Dallas a couple of years ago. She said, “Atheists need fellowship, too.” And that’s true.

The organization American Atheists was founded by Madalyn Murray O’Hair 40 years ago. They have a newsletter that’s kind of boring but their Web site has a lot of good information. American Atheists is primarily a church-state separation activist group. They’re located in New Jersey.

Another organization I want to mention is the Freedom From Religion Foundation. They’re in Madison, Wisconsin. They’re also a church-state separation activist group. Their Web site isn’t as good, but their monthly newspaper is excellent.

Locally we have the Metroplex Atheists, which I’m a member of, and Terry is the chairman of. We meet formally once a month. We meet informally once a week. We have a newsletter, and a Web site, and we also have a discussion forum. After my speech is done, I want you to remind me to tell you about a recent thread subject on the discussion forum. I don’t want to tell you now because you’ll dwell on that and not pay attention to the rest of my speech.

As I’ve mentioned, I’ve been an atheist for quite some time, but I only decided to join up and get actively involved about two or three years ago. That was when the movie “The Passion of the Christ” came out. I saw very well meaning parents taking their very small children to see that movie. A violent movie, that despite its grand message, was inappropriate for children.

So I started hanging out with the Metroplex Atheists, and Ellen Johnson was right, atheists do benefit from fellowship. At least for that one hour a week, I felt that I was finally being true to myself.

The Metroplex Atheists’s motto is “If you’re interested in us, we’re interested in

you.” We don’t recruit. The Methodist ministers I know will tell you that their one mission is to create disciples. We’re not looking to do that. We’re just looking to be a source for people either socially or educationally, through books or that sort of thing.

Important Books

I want to talk about some important books. We have a handout that lists these, so you don’t have to take notes.

One of them is Dan Barker’s book, called “Losing Faith in Faith: From Preacher to Atheist.” Dan is an ordained minister. He wrote a lot of Christian music and even vacation bible school materials. He still receives royalties from them. He became an atheist much to the disappointment of his parents. However, after long talks, with his parents, they became atheists, too. This is frequently the book we recommend to people who tell us they are on the fence of they have recently become atheists.

Another good book from 1957 is called “Why I am not a Christian,” by Bertrand Russell. Bertrand Russell was a mathematician and philosopher. This was the first book that I read that had an atheist point of view. It was quite stunning to me because it was the first time I read that Jesus wasn’t necessarily a good man all of the time or 100 percent a positive role model.

Also there’s a good book that’s in print today, it’s been on the New York Times bestseller list for a long time now, it’s by Richard Dawkins, it’s called “The God Delusion.” Dawkins is a British scientist who writes frequently about religion, and this is one of his most readable books.

There’s another book called “The Age of Reason” by Thomas Paine. Most of us remember Thomas Paine as the founding father who wrote a pamphlet called “Common Sense” that inspired Americans to fight for independence from England. He’s a smart man and a good writer. But the book “The Age of Reason” killed his career. In the book he criticizes organized religion but he does say that he believes in god. Paine’s name became mud, people in England were

financed and imprisoned just for printing any of his books. Teddy Roosevelt called Paine a filthy little atheist. There are no monuments to him, and not even a grave site.

I want to read to you a paragraph. On the very first page of “Age of Reason,” Paine says:

“I believe in one god and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.”

Paine was called an atheist. He died bitter and penniless for that very reason.

One more book I’d like to mention is Carl Sagan’s book, it’s called “The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark.” It’s not strictly an atheism book. It’s a call for rational thinking and science, and it’s probably my favorite book in the English language. I like to promote it as much as I can.

Eight Ways to Annoy an Atheist

Take notes! My next section is called “Eight ways to annoy an atheist.”

Number one. We hate it when people say there are no atheists in foxholes. Especially now that we have a war going on, you will hear that uttered by newscasters almost daily. Usually one of those activist groups I’ve mentioned will contact the newscasters who say this. It’s an insult. We have two very active members in Metroplex Atheists, one served in the Iraq war, another served both in World War II and in Korea. They will tell you that they are atheists and seeing battle didn’t convert them. In fact, there was a march on Washington on Veteran’s Day, Nov. 11, 2005 that was called the Atheists in Foxholes March.

The second thing I wanted to mention is when we talk about the theory of evolution. Evolution is not a theory any more than gravity is a theory. The fossil record does support evolution.

Number three is using testimony as evidence. Testimony and evidence are two dif-

Continued on page 12

Are you searching for Atheists on the internet?

Join in the discussions at the DFW Atheist Talk group.
groups.yahoo.com/group/DFWAtheistTalk/

TCU – From page 11

ferent things. I'm not a real big fan of Benny Hinn. I don't know how many of you know of Benny Hinn. He's a faith healer, he's on television every day. Joni Lamb of DayStar had her on her show not too long ago. I know Joni, and I wrote a letter to her telling her I was disappointed in her for promoting him. I feel that if you watch any of the exposes that have shown up on the news about Benny Hinn, you will come to the conclusion that he's a crook. Joni sent me a letter which was probably not the nicest letter she ever wrote. She said she's heard enough testimony from people to know that he is successful.

I'm going to compare Benny Hinn to bloodletting. Have you read about bloodletting? For thousands and thousands of years, doctors and barbers used bloodletting to cure people. They'd just open a vein and let a whole bunch of blood out. If the patient got better, bloodletting is terrific. If the patient died, he was just too far gone for bloodletting to work. Finally, science came on board. They started analyzing this. Using a lot of people to study, they came to the conclusion that bloodletting doesn't work. That's something that went up through the 19th century.

And just recently, within the last five or 10 years, there was something that doctors did, especially for athletes, called knee scraping. Some people got better, some people didn't. Finally the scientific principles were applied, and they found out that knee scraping didn't work. Even though there were people who said, "Yeah, I feel better."

You've heard of ID, Intelligent Design? I'm not going to spend a lot of time on ID. But there is no science in ID. The books about ID are pretty much mumbo jumbo and they're full of holes that do not hold up to science.

Another thing that bothers us, which I touched on before, is fraudulent ministers. If you turn on the television any time day or night, and channel surf, there are a lot of religious stations. There you will see men and women wearing expensive clothes and preaching what we call jackpot evangelism. Send your money to me. God wants you to send your money to me. Do that and he will reward you.

A few years ago I saw a speech by John Blanton. John Blanton is the president of the North Texas Skeptics. I'll never forget what he said. John said real men of god wear sec-

ond hand clothes and live in a parsonage. And he's right. I shudder when I think of the thousands of people who send their money to Benny Hinn and all these other people.

And we've got the Copelands. They're right here in Fort Worth. A few years ago, god told them you need two Citation X business jets to go spread the gospel. So all these people sent them money to get the business jets. And then what happens? I don't know if you saw a week or two ago, Channel 8 did an investigative report. The Copelands are using those business jets for pleasure travel. They're not spreading the gospel with them.

Looking around at these beautiful faces, I think probably you're all too young to remember Bob Tilton. When Pastor Bob reined over Dallas. I'll just ask you to ask one of the older people among you about Bob Tilton.

Another thing that bothers me is when people say, "Albert Einstein, the smartest man who ever lived, believed in god." No he didn't. Einstein didn't always choose his words carefully, so sometimes he left people with that impression. He was often correcting this notion.

This quote is from a letter Einstein wrote in 1954:

"It was, of course, a lie what you read about my religious convictions, a lie which is being systematically repeated. I do not believe in a personal god and I have never denied this but expressed it clearly. If something is in me which can be called religious, then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our science can reveal it."

I term this next subject that annoys us as faith. The American author Mark Twain said, "Faith is believing what you know ain't true."

The last time I had dinner with my daughter, my rebellious daughter, she was wearing a T-shirt that said, "Not seeing is believing, Hebrews 11:1."

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see."

In the interest of common decency, that night as well as today, I am not going to pull my hair out. But we can argue the merits of faith. But faith is the opposite of proof. And proof is the opposite of faith. To me, to say otherwise is just silly.

I attended a Methodist Christmas Eve service in 2005. The minister's message that evening was about faith. That's OK. But he

argued that we should embrace things and not try to understand them. He said, "We westerners are always trying to understand things." And he was being critical. I cringed. Trying to understand things, I believe, is noble. But to him, it was villainous.

My last of the things that annoy us is when people say, and we hear it every day, America was founded as a Christian nation. And it wasn't. The founding fathers were all secularists. The Declaration of Independence does mention a creator, but not god and not the Christian god. The Constitution makes no reference at all.

Most of the Founding Fathers were deists. Probably many were agnostics or atheists but they knew saying so would be political suicide.

I want to read to you the Treaty of Tripoli. This was signed on Nov. 4, 1796. It was approved by the U.S. Senate on June 7, 1797, and ratified by President John Adams on June 10, 1797.

It says: "(T)he government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion."

The Bible

And now, let's talk about this [holds up bible]. Mark Twain said, "The bible is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it, and some clever fables, and some blood-drenched history, and some good morals, and a wealth of obscenity, and upwards of a thousand lies."

Atheists love quoting Twain. He also said, "Our bible reveals to us the character of our god with minute and remorseless exactness. It is perhaps the most damnatory biography that exists in print anywhere."

The bible is like a drug, you get your first one free. I received this in the 6th grade, along with the other 6th graders at my church, for learning the 23rd Psalm. The 23rd Psalm is beautiful and comforting, and I still remember it. Although it's worded differently in the bible that they gave me. The inscription from our minister says, "May god bless you as you study his word" and it's signed by our minister, Robert Lakey.

All across America, 6th graders still receive bibles from their churches. My daughters did. I believe it is inappropriate for youngsters.

I can do a little quoting without saying these out loud because they are a little bit strange.

Ezekiel 23:20 talks about lust, and donkeys, and the size of donkeys' anatomy and

the stuff that comes out of donkeys.

Ezekiel 4:12 talks about eating bread made out of dung.

II Kings 18:27 talks about eating dung and drinking urine.

I wrote an article for the Metroplex Atheists newsletter, it's one of my favorite things I've written for them, it's called, "Jesus didn't mean what he said: What I learned from calling prayer lines." I would throw these verses at the people who answered the prayer lines, these poor people who would answer the prayer line when I called. They never heard these. Despite the fact that they were very involved in their churches and they were representing different religious organizations.

Genesis 22, the story of Abraham being ordered by god to sacrifice his son. I don't believe that's noble. It's my personal opinion. That story haunts me, it chills me to this day.

Genesis 19, Lot's daughters get their father drunk and sleep with him, they both get pregnant.

Judges 19:29, a crowd wants to rape a priest. Instead his host offers the crowd his daughter and the priest's concubine. The crowd rapes the concubine all night long. In the morning she is dead. The priest cuts her into 12 pieces and sends the pieces to the coasts of Israel.

My ex-wife once told me that you can probably support any point of view by using the bible. That's probably true. I once heard about a couple that was arguing about who was going to make the coffee that morning. The woman said, "Well, the bible says the man is supposed to make the coffee."

He said, "Where does it say that?"

And she said, "You know, he-brews."

My ex-wife also once told me that nothing in the Old Testament counts, because Jesus came along and changed everything. Let's look at the New Testament just for a moment.

Remember when Jesus was at a party, and his mom came up and said, "Jesus we need you," and he turned around and said, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with me?" [John 2:4.]

Now, if I'd said that to my mom, I would

have been busted in the chops.

The New Testament also tells us that women are supposed to be silent in church, that's in Corinthians and Timothy. [I Corinthians 14:3-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12.]

Ephesians 6:5-7 tells us that slaves are to obey their masters at all times.

To me, the bible is not necessarily a good source of morals. Think about the first two of the 10 Commandments. Do not worship other gods, and do not make graven images. Do you remember a few years ago, the Taliban in Afghanistan took dynamite and destroyed these huge ancient Buddhist statues. If you think about it, if we want to honor the first and second commandments, it seems to me we should have been applauding what they did. All of us, whether we were Christian or atheist or whatever, thought it was terrible.

I think that any of us in this room could come up with a better list of 10 Commandments. What did god leave out that you might put in? I'd gladly toss out the "don't worship other gods" to add "one must never enslave another." If you read the bible, it does endorse and condone slavery.

Still, the bible is a beautiful an important source of literature. None of us wants it to go away. You might have heard the old joke, "I hate Shakespeare and the bible, they're full of all those clichés!" Of course, those clichés started with the bible and Shakespeare.

Common Ground

It is important to me that I leave here with you knowing there is a lot of common ground for all of us. Atheists and Christians do think differently, and science tells us it is quite likely that our brains are wired differently.

But I want to tell you about a couple of men that I admire. How many of you know who Ole Anthony is? He is a minister in Dallas, he's head of the Trinity Foundation. He's a watchdog who keeps his eye on TV ministers. Ole was invited warmly to speak to Metroplex Atheists a few years ago. Our former director donated a car to Ole's organization.

Another man I want to mention, I doubt you know, his name is Billy Strayhorn. He is a

Methodist minister. To borrow a quote from Col. Blake of the TV show MASH, "I avoid church religiously." But when my children were small, they attended a church whose pastor was Billy Strayhorn. It was St. John the Apostle United Methodist Church in Arlington. I always enjoyed listening to him preach.

I saw him preach a lot. And I found his own journey, where he became a minister, fascinating. He had planned to be a farmer, just like his father. One day at church, he saw the minister, and he wanted to know what time bible study was, and instead, he found himself saying, "How do I become a minister?" The words just came out.

He was driving his tractor in a field one day and a vision of god stared at him from the sky. Billy kept trying to look away, and he'd look up and it was still there. So he decided to become a minister.

What I say about Billy is that he is the most normal guy I know who is a minister. No jab intended at him or to you. I admire and value him and when life gets tough, I do seek him out for wisdom and comfort.

He's now the minister at First United Methodist Church of Joshua, Texas. If that guy can reach this tired old atheist, then he's got some kind of gift. If any of you get the opportunity to hear Billy speak, I recommend it.

There is more common ground.

We atheists want to have personal integrity.

We atheists want to be good to others and help others.

We atheists want to make this world a better place for everyone.

We atheists do this not because we seek a later reward or that we fear punishment in hell.

We do this because it is the right thing to do.

Last year I was listening to the radio talk show host Michael Savage. He talked about atheists not believing in the afterlife. He said, "Atheists have nothing to live for. They might as well shoot themselves right now."

Savage got it completely wrong.

This world, this life, is what counts.

Do you know of any Church/State separation violations?

Some things to look for are the posting of the ten commandment in public (government) buildings including public school buildings, city parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.

To voice your concerns, please email the Metroplex Atheist Director:

director@metroplexatheists.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Business Meeting

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:

What: Meeting to decide general business of the group and to discuss current events
Date: Third Sunday of the month
Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Place: Humanist Hall

Social Meetings

DALLAS / PLANO ATHEIST MEETUP DAY:

What: Meet with other local Atheists to talk about your beliefs
Date: Every Tuesday
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: TBA; For locations near you visit: atheists.meetup.com

J. GILLIGAN'S ATHEIST MEETUP:

What: 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens
Date: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, (& 5th) Wednesday
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill (Meet on the grill side)
 400 E. Abram Street
 Arlington, TX

BLUE DANUBE ATHEIST MEETUP:

What: 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens
Date: 1st Wednesday of the Month
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: Blue Danube
 2230 West Park Row
 Pantego, TX

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP:

What: All the things you want in a church, without the gods
Date: First and third Sunday of the month. For information visit: www.dfwfellowship.com
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Place: Humanist Hall

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH:

What: Sunday brunch without the gospels
Date: Second and fourth Sunday
Time: 10:15 AM – 11:30 AM
Place: TBA

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP STUDY GROUP

What: Explores classical mythology
Date: Second and fourth Sunday
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Place: Humanist Hall

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP STITCH 'N BITCH

What: Knit, vent and dish. All levels of knitters (and other crafters) welcome
Date: Second and fourth Tuesday
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: Humanist Hall

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP OBJECTIVIST LECTURE

What: For those interested in a better understanding of Ayn Rand's philosophy of objectivism
Date: Thursday, January 19
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: Humanist Hall

HUMANIST HALL IS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT
 7100 BOULEVARD 26 (GRAPEVINE HIGHWAY),
 SUITE 304, RICHLAND HILLS TX

To have your events listed email:
The Atheist Voice Editor at
editor@metroplexatheists.org

METROPLEX ATHEISTS

COME
 JOIN
 US

EVERY THIRD SUNDAY
 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

www.metroplexatheists.org

March 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 DFWEF	5	6 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	7 Blue Danube	8	9	10
11 EF Brunch EF Study	12	13 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	14 J. Gilligan's	15	16	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>
18 Reg. Meeting & MARG	19	20 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	21 J. Gilligan's	22	23	24
25 EF Brunch EF Study	26	27 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	28 J. Gilligan's	29	30	31

April 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 DFWEF	2	3 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	4 Blue Danube	5	6	7
8 EF Brunch EF Study	9	10 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	11 J. Gilligan's	12	13	14
15 Reg. Meeting DFWEF	16	17 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	18 J. Gilligan's	19	20	21
22 EF Brunch EF Study	23	24 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	25 J. Gilligan's	26	27	28
29	30					

May 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	2 Blue Danube	3	4	5
6 DFWEF	7	8 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	9 J. Gilligan's	10	11	12
13 EF Brunch EF Study	14	15 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	16 J. Gilligan's	17	18	19 <i>Armed Forces Day</i>
20 Reg. Meeting DFWEF	21	22 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	23 J. Gilligan's	24	25	26
27 EF Brunch EF Study	28 <i>Memorial Day</i>	29 D/P Atheist Meetup Day	30 J. Gilligan's	31	1	2

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For more information, please visit our website: www.metroplexatheists.org

To submit an article or letter to the editor, please email us.

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Deliver to:

WHY DO WE FIGHT?

'Because we must. Because we have the call. Because it is nobler to fight for rationality without winning than to give up in the face of continued defeats. Because whatever true progress humanity makes is through the rationality of the occasional individual and because any one individual we may win for the cause may do more for humanity than a hundred thousand who hug superstition to their breasts.'

— Isaac Asimov, when asked why he fights religion with no hope for victory