

- *THINK DEISM!* -

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State and Religious Child Abuse

by Robert L. Johnson

Most people assume government protects children. And, most people assume religion is also a source of protection for children. Most people are wrong on both counts, especially when it comes to the unholy union of government and religion.

In an effort to protect children from abuse, federal and state governments have statutes that prohibit abusing children. However, these same governments exempt religions from abusing children. The laws require parents and legal guardians to provide their children with medical care. The deadly exemption from this applies to religion. Any parent or guardian whose religious belief in faith-healing conflicts with the common sense requirement to provide medical care for their minor children is exempt.

There are many examples of children who die because of their parent's superstitions which are reinforced and condoned by the government exemptions. Children, who would live if given access to standard medical care, unnecessarily die. So many innocent and helpless children have died, the American Academy of Pediatrics has issued a public statement addressing this type of child abuse and neglect.

Another form of abuse of children that the government overlooks is mutilation of the genitalia of infant boys done to satisfy religious superstition. [There are no medical benefits from this barbaric practice](#). The overriding "reason" for it is Jewish superstition, which is no real reason at all. This attack on nature has also overflowed from Jews to Christians in the US. Fortunately, Christians in Europe don't partake in this twisted practice.

According to Genesis 17:10-11, God told Abraham that as a token of God's covenant with the Hebrews, all Jewish infant males at the tender age of eight days should have their foreskin trimmed!

As if this unnatural mutilation of infants isn't bad enough, it's now public knowledge that the Jewish perverts who do the actual cutting also actually literally suck the blood from the infant's penis and tissue with their mouths! This has been done for thousands of years by the Jews. It is so common it has a name in Hebrew, Metzitzah be'Peh. Anyone who uses common sense knows that this is not only unnaturally disgusting, but that it is dangerous for the baby. If the rabbi who's sucking the infant's penis has any STD, there's a good chance the innocent baby will be infected. In fact, this has already happened, and the victim died from contracting herpes from the sucking rabbi. Now this "progressive" religion has decided the rabbis sucking the babies' blood should/could use a tube to avoid further deaths and infections!

The rabbis and mohels who perform circumcisions seem to have a fixation on sucking babies' blood. With their "progress" to permitting rabbis and mohels who desire to use a sterile tube while sucking the baby's circumcision blood, if they so chose, is affixed the practice of sucking orally on the tube. The Rabbinical Council of America seems to believe there is a requirement of Jewish law that demands the sucking of the blood from the victim's penis and surrounding tissue be done orally. In a public statement on this insane topic, they wrote, "A well-trained mohel, adhering to the scientific principles of sterile technique and antisepsis, essentially reduces the infectious risk of circumcision to the point where it is close to zero. Performing oral suction via a sterile tube does not pose any increased risk.

"For those authorities who follow the view that suction via a sterile tube is completely permitted as a matter of Jewish law, this is clearly the optimal method to fulfill the requirement of Metzitzah be'Peh. In this manner, one absolutely fulfills the precept whilst placing the infant and mohel at no additional risk."

How can the politicians and their government turn a blind eye on such disgusting practices and actions? I believe it has a lot to do with the wealth and power of organized religion, that is of such importance to the career politicians. Right and wrong doesn't even enter the picture. Any reasonable person would expect society to keep innocent children safe from such unreasonable and damaging practices. Yet, the government seems to think differently.

The hypocrisy of the government is brought out by its selectiveness in banning some religious atrocities, while giving approval to the ones mentioned above. For example, the government outlaws female circumcision, which is practiced by Moslems, but not practiced by Jews and Christians.

The abhorrent writings found in the Bible make me think of the following taken from Thomas Paine's outstanding book, [*The Age of Reason*](#): "Is it because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or feel no interest in the honor of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference? . . .

"It is incumbent of every man who reverences the character of the Creator, and who wishes to lessen the catalogue of artificial miseries, and remove the cause that has sown persecutions thick among mankind, to expel all ideas of revealed religion, as a dangerous heresy and an impious fraud."

The Bible's God is Losing Ground Making Room for Nature's God

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

One evening, while surfing the Internet, I tumbled onto an intriguing Web page at the following address: <http://www.archstl.org/archives/about/cathhist.htm>. It describes the organization of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. Totally subject to the Pope, this Catholic complex is administered by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

According to their latest report, the U.S. Church has 400 bishops, 45,000 priests, 75,000 women religious (sisters and nuns). The Church is spread through the nation in 19,000 parishes. Its members number 65,000,000 Catholics, making up 23% of the nation's population.

The Church inculcates its religious doctrines not only in its churches but also in its schools. Today in the U.S. there are 7,000 Catholic elementary schools educating 2 million students annually. There are 1,300 Catholic high schools teaching 650,000 students and 238 Catholic colleges and universities educating more than 700,000 students. The U.S. Catholic school system employs more than 175,000 educators.

During twenty years, I was a Catholic priest who preached in church and taught in school. I am fully aware of the Catholic Church's effective organization for spreading its religious doctrines. These are all based on the Bible, elaborated by theologians and preached principally by priests. All priests swear blind obedience to the Pope who claims infallibility. Whatever he declares dogma is absolute truth and unchanging.

In 1967, when I no longer believed in the Catholic Church's teaching authority and truthfulness, I left the Church. I stood by myself relying on God's gift to humans - intellect. I then believed in God not as revealed in the Bible but as revealed in Nature. Its structures and laws presuppose an Intelligent Creator.

Knowing that Nature's God is the only God, I feel compelled, even in my old age, to help others know the truth. I am mainly concerned about the people who are questioning the teaching of the Church. They need help to free themselves from the bondage of the Church. Alone, without any affiliation to a church, I feel rather helpless and unable to challenge and weaken the powerful organization of the Church. The task of freeing people from the Church and its teachings looks like a mission impossible. The odds of my succeeding seems less than one in a billion.

With these sentiments of helplessness, I returned to the Internet for some sign of hope. I found it at the following address: <http://www.geocities.com/pharsea/decline.html>. The title of the page is "The Decline of the Catholic Church in the U.S.A." From there I quote the following statistics.

Priests.

Between 1930 and 1965, the number of priests in the United States more than doubled to 58,000. Since then the number has fallen to 45,000. By 2020, there will be only 31,000 priests left, and more than half of these priests will be over 70.

In 1965, 1,575 new priests were ordained in the United States. In 2002, this number was 450.

In 1965, only 1% of the U.S. parishes were without a priest. In 2002 this number was 15%.

Between 1965 and 2002, the number of seminarians dropped from 49,000 to 4,700. Two-thirds of the 600 seminaries that were operating in 1965 have now closed.

Religious Orders.

In 1965, there were 180,000 nuns. By 2002, that had fallen to 75,000 and the average age of a Catholic nun is today 68.

In 1965, 3,559 young men were studying to become Jesuit priests. In 2000, the figure was 38.

In 1965, 2,251 young men were studying to become Franciscan priests. In 2000, the figure was 60.

In 1965, there were 912 seminarians in the Christian Brothers. In 2002, there were only 7.

The number of young men studying to become Franciscan and Redemptorist priests fell from 3,379 in 1965 to 84 in 2000.

Catholic schools.

Almost half of all Catholic high schools in the United States have closed since 1965.

The student population has fallen from 700,000 to 386,000.

Attendance at Mass.

In 1958, a Gallup Poll reported that 74% of Catholics then attended church on Sundays. In 2000, the rate was 25%, according to the Fordham study.

Statistics on the decline of the Catholic Church in Europe are also available at the above Web address.

Clearly the Catholic Church in the United States has declined significantly in the last forty years. It is believed that the recent scandal of the pedophile priests in the U.S. will accelerate the decline even more.

Many Catholics are walking away from their Church. They still believe in God and want to remain close to him. Some go to another Christian Church. Many do not know where to go.

They are ready to learn that to continue a close relationship with God they need not go to a church, nor to a priest or minister. The wonders of nature, its structures and laws reveal an intelligent Creator. God exists. The flowers and the trees, the mountains and the oceans, the animals and the birds, babies and scientists point to God's existence. God does not need churches nor worship as designed by Popes. Nor does God need our adoration and admiration. But if we want to praise him and rely on his help, we can do it at home or in our gardens, alone or with family and friends. A simple thank-you will do for God. Why not for us?

You can visit the site of Ray Fontaine at: <http://deism.com/to-natures-god.net/>

Honk if You Love Religious Freedom

by Pauline Rocco

Some time ago the United States Air Force Academy was rocked by a scandal involving revelations about the rapes of dozens of women cadets and the systematic cover-up of these crimes. Several top officials were removed from the academy and the Air Force promised to clean up its act. To make amends, they even removed the famous Bring Me Men slogan from its prominent place at the Academy. Apparently a new slogan reads: Bring Me Evangelicals.

You probably thought the "I knew my God is bigger than his" General Boykin case was an exceptional one. Think again. Captain Melinda Morton said she was fired by the Air Force from her position as a chaplain at the Air Force Academy because she agreed with reports revealing "strident evangelicalism at the academy." Evidently Morton, among other things, thought her colleague and fellow chaplain overstepped his bounds just a tad when he told freshmen cadets that all those "not born again will burn in hell." According to the Washington Post, Morton charged, "The evangelicals want to subvert the system. They have a very clear social and political agenda. The evangelical tone is pervasive at the academy, and it's aimed at converting these young people who are under intense pressure anyway."

Similarly, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the academy's football coach "hung a banner in the locker room laying out a „Competitor“s Creed“ including the lines „I am a Christian first and last“ and I am a member of „Team Jesus Christ.“ " Cadets who opt out of prayer service have been forced to march back to their dorm in "a ritual called „heathen flight.“ " The *Times* article also disclosed that the cadet dining hall was once blanketed with posters advertising a showing of *The Passion of the Christ* including the line: "This is an officially sponsored USAFA event."

Mikey Weinstein, a graduate of the academy (1977) and father of a cadet, told Chris Matthews that his son had been harassed at the academy by evangelicals. Weinstein also asserted that in 1993 the famed academy parachute team, Wings of Blue, did a jump while carrying the "keys of heaven" which upon landing, they presented to James Dobson of Focus on the Family. Your tax dollars hard at work!!

Captain Morton reports that ninety percent of the cadet wing (student body) is Christian. Of that ninety percent, one third are Catholic, another third are main line Protestant, and the other third are evangelical. However, "the evangelicals have a much bigger voice among the chaplains." Morton said she raised objections because "it's about the Constitution." (A minor point, I suppose, to evangelicals). Keep in mind that Morton has been removed from the academy and reassigned to Japan.

Do you see a pattern here? The above percentages hold true for the general population as well. Yet evangelicals have garnered a dominating influence in the Congress, and are moving to do the same in the Courts. Where is the allegedly left wing liberal media in all this? The media, particularly television news, is working as ever, to distract rather than inform the people.

The vast majority of the American people have always been Christian. But the establishment of the Constitution in a strikingly revolutionary way, kept religious dogma out of the government. I cannot even begin to explain why this was so necessary in a more eloquent way than did the premier intellectual of the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson, when he powerfully proclaimed:

".. our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions..." "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no god. It neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg."

Jefferson made it abundantly clear why he worked so tirelessly on the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom which began the process of DISESTABLISHING the governmental power that churches had wielded over the colonies:

"millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined and imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools and the other half hypocrites."

When the Statute was adopted, Jefferson rejoiced saying:

...to see the standard of reason at length erected, after so many ages during which the human mind has been held in vassalage by kings, priests and nobles; and it is honorable for us to have produced the first legislation [which] has had the courage to declare that the reason of man may be trusted with the formation of his own opinions.

Deists must work hard to preserve our endangered religious freedom from evangelical coercion. The coercion is already real at the Air Force Academy. Expose this story in your local newspaper and on talk shows. It is our duty.

Misconceptions and YHWH

by Peter Murphy

Christianity is built on a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Judaism and Jewish scripture. The reason Christians have failed to realize this is evidence of the effectiveness of Christian clerical propaganda. These clerics have a vested interest in propagating the falsehoods they make their livelihood on and in effect prepare new generations of clerical parasites and parasitical hosts; this may seem an unfair assessment of the situation, but if one takes the time to consider the wealth and prerogatives enjoyed by the Christian clergy, one must wear blinders to ignore this ignoble fact of the Christian community. In I Cor. 14 and 17, Paul infers that Christianity is vain if Christ has not risen from the dead. This essay will demonstrate that Christianity is vain without trying to disprove something as questionable as a resurrection, but by merely examining Jewish scripture with an impartial eye and applying the technique of critical reading. Critical reading is part of the historical method and involves the impartial reading of a text reserving judgment on its validity until the point the author is trying to make is made clear.

The validity of Christianity is not based on the miracle of a resurrection but a misunderstanding of Judaism and Jewish scripture. Christianity's foundation rests on three theological pillars. First, that a historical Adam and Eve introduced a hereditary original sin that has corrupted all their descendents down to the present time. Second, that the Mosaic Law not only applied to all humanity, but cursed all humanity in the process because its involved 613 commandments were unworkable and one could not be justified by trying to follow them. And third, that nothing less than the death of God Incarnate, who came to earth as a historical person, could deliver humanity from sin with a universal self-sacrifice. Also, Christian dogma insists that the whole of Jewish scripture repeatedly reaffirms these theological pillars.

It is not necessary to seek out a rabbi to realize that these pillars are cardboard. One need merely read the Tanakh, or the inferiorly translated Old Testament, to see that there is no solid scriptural support for Christian doctrines. If one applies the historical tool of critical reading to Jewish scripture, it becomes apparent that Judaism and not Christianity is the logical development of those scriptures. This can be accomplished by understanding what Jewish scripture has to say about the Covenant, the Mosaic Laws, and Salvation.

The Hebrew word for covenant is ber-eeth' and means contract. Contracts involve mutual promises, where parties involved promise to keep up their part of the agreement. There are a number of covenants in the Tanakh that can be divided between those made between YHWH and Israel or individuals, and those made between individuals. According to the Tanakh, YHWH made his first covenant with Noah. The terms of this first covenant is that Noah would build an ark for himself, his immediate family, and the animals and birds that Noah was to collect; YHWH's part of this contract was to deliver them safely through the great flood and then afterwards to promise both man and beast

never to flood the earth again. YHWH even placed his hunting bow in the sky as a visual sign of his part of the covenant and this is the origin of the rainbow in Jewish mythology. YHWH's second covenant was with Abraham. The terms of this contract was that all of Abraham's descendents throughout all their generations were to be circumcised in the flesh according to a given ritual; YHWH's part of this contract was to multiply Abraham's descendents and to give them the land from the Nile to the Euphrates. YHWH's third covenant was with Moses. The terms of this contract were even more involved. The Hebrews, and later the Jews, were not only to keep the commandment for the circumcision, but an additional 612 commandments involving everything from highly detailed religious ritual, costumes, and objects, to social and commercial rules of conduct. YHWH's part of this contract was to keep his part of the previous two covenants but also to provide peace, security, prosperity, and rain. Like the previous covenants, YHWH declared this covenant everlasting through all the generations of Israel. The context of the "new covenant" in Jewish scripture is found in Jeremiah chapter thirty-one. It is not about doing away with the old, as Christians mistakenly believe, but in reaffirming the covenant made with Moses; the main difference is that in the New Covenant the LAW will be written into the hearts of Israel and no longer will people need anyone to teach them how to keep it. In a sense, it is not unlike a couple retaking their wedding vows on their fiftieth wedding anniversary. And not all covenants were made between YHWH and Israel. For example, a personal covenant was made between YHWH and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, who for his zeal in killing a couple was rewarded with an eternal priesthood for him and his descendents; and a personal (nonreligious) covenant was made between David and the elders of Israel when he was anointed king.

The Mosaic Law is merely part of the third and everlasting covenant between YHWH and the Hebrews. It is like a highly involved contract with many articles; the covenant between YHWH and Moses acting on behalf of Israel is best understood as a contract with 7 articles which YHWH promised to keep (see above) and 613 articles that the Hebrews were to keep. According to the Tanakh, Israel repeatedly broke its part of the contract and YHWH would use coercion to try and get Israel to accept its responsibilities. The Tanakh makes it clear that YHWH will not let Israel out of its contractual obligations.

The Hebrew word for Salvation is *yesh-oo'-aw* has several meanings: Welfare, Prosperity, Deliverance, Salvation, and Victory. The context of Salvation in Jewish scripture is not one of a single historical event, like the death of a Christ figure, but an ongoing process of spiritual development on both the individual and community level. Eventually the process of history eroded the tribal identities of the Hebrews and they evolved into the Jews during the Second Temple period, where little distinction was

made between those of conversion and birth. In Jewish scripture, salvation is not linked to some afterlife, much less eternal life, but in deliverance in the here and now.

As previously stated in this paper, Christianity is built upon a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of Jewish scripture and Judaism. The Covenant made at Sinai is eternal, the LAW is part of that Covenant, and it applies only to the Jews. YHWH is never described as the God of Egypt, or Babylon, or Greece, or Europe. YHWH never made a covenant with the Gentiles. The New Covenant is not a replacement of the old, as Christians think, but a reaffirmation of the old; the only difference is that the LAW would be directly written on the minds and hearts of the Jews. Christians mistakenly look to Isaiah chapter 49 to justify their assertion that YHWH is the God of all nations. The proper context of this chapter is that the Jews are the light to the Gentiles, and if Gentiles wish to share in the blessings then they have two choices, they can convert to Judaism by being circumcised in the flesh and keeping the LAW, or they can keep the Noahide Laws which applies to Gentiles. YHWH is the national God of Israel; he is no one else's God. Christianity is greatly mistaken when it asserts that no one could be justified by the LAW; this is true but not for the reasons Christians think. YHWH never promised an afterlife to Israel, the LAW is a contractual obligation of Israel -- Israel is expected to keep it as a minimum sign of good faith towards its God. And Salvation is not about some promised afterlife linked to the death of a Messiah figure, but in the present world we all see and experience. Christianity is simply mistaken and all the hopes of Christians are dross if YHWH is real or not. This is no surprise, the unstated implications of Christianity is that YHWH somehow did not get it right with the Jews and set them up to fail, only to forget his eternal promises to them and replace his eternal covenant with a new one made for Gentiles where salvation is perverted into an absurd promise of eternal life for merely believing in a man named Jesus. If YHWH was to cancel the LAW and replace it with mere faith, he would not have clearly mentioned that he was going to write the LAW into the hearts and minds of his chosen people the Jews. If YHWH was intending to grant eternal life to his faithful, he would have at least mentioned it in the whole of the Tanakh; instead one finds no such promise, but a number of verses talk about the finality of death.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humor to console him for what he is."

"Liberty of speech invites and provokes liberty to be used again, and so bringeth much to a man's knowledge."

"The man who fears no truths has nothing to fear from lies."

"If money be not thy servant, it will be thy master. The covetous man cannot so properly be said to possess wealth, as that may be said to possess him."

Francis Bacon

"Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in."

"Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a point d'appui, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might find a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time."

Henry David Thoreau

"I have always held firmly to the thought that each one of us can do a little to bring some portion of misery to an end."

Albert Schweitzer

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That Deistic Document, The Declaration of Independence

by Robert L. Johnson

Americans are having a vital part of their history kept from them. That is the Deist nature of the origins and founding of the United States of America.

To demonstrate the fact that America can trace its roots to Deism all we have to do is look at the Declaration of Independence. In it we find references to God that are only made in a Deistic way. We read about "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God", about the "Creator", and of "divine Providence". Nowhere in it do we read about Jesus Christ, Moses, Christianity, or the Bible. It is strictly a Deistic document.

As Deists we need to let the world know this fact. We need to cut the Christian fundamentalists and the neocons off when they start to mislead people about this fact. What is the cost of keeping our mouths shut? Just take a look at the situation we find ourselves in today. Because of an unbalanced foreign policy that unreasonably favors Israel, who the Bible teaches is made up of people who are "above all people who are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6) over not only their Palestinian and Arab neighbors, but over America's best interests, we are in a war with the Islamic guerillas. The Judeo-Christian mindset has crippled reason and allows Biblical superstition to run free. The superstitions of the Hebrew Bible have even been carved into stone on the US Supreme Court building! It cripples the rational thought of those who make American policy and laws to the point of saying it's OK to have the Ten Commandments outside a

governmental building but not inside! Because of the ignorance of most Americans to the Deistic roots of their own country, the neocons have a much easier job of using Americans for RPG fodder in their unnecessary wars.

The reason that Deism propels to the front of the minds of Deists is to be applied by the individual Deist not only to religious/spiritual matters, but to everyday life which includes politics. Perhaps this is the reason the government has not seen fit to tell the story of Deism. People are much easier to manipulate if they're not used to reasoning things out and just take things from authority figures on "faith". After all, it was Deists like Jefferson, Paine, and Washington who routinely used their reason that brought down the established government in 1776.

Science Brings Us Closer to God Than “Revealed” Religions Do

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

One evening, with a heavy heart I took a walk under a full moon that lit up the sky and kindled my memory of Galileo. I pictured him peering through his homemade telescope. In 1609, he was the first human to see the moon's pitted and mountainous surface, the four moons circling Jupiter, and thousands of stars invisible to the naked eye. These stars flashed signals supporting the Polish astronomer Copernicus who wrote in 1543 that the earth circles the sun. The gleam in Galileo's eyes reflected the stars in the sky and the joy in his heart.

Others did not rejoice, notably the advisors of the Pope. For centuries, the Roman Church had accepted and taught Ptolemy's 1500-years-old theory that positioned a stationary earth at the center of the universe. In this system, the planets and the sun revolved around the earth - and Rome. What a glorious place to be! So, when Galileo endorsed Copernicus's sun-centered theory, the papal court cried, "Heresy."

To determine the orthodoxy of Galileo's writings, the Pope did not consult astronomers, only theologians. Before advising the Pope, these churchmen did not search the heavens through a telescope. They simply perused the Bible searching for texts that supported the Church's position. They found two. One stated that "at Joshua's order, the sun stopped in mid-heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day." (Js 10:13) The other text read, "the sun rises and the sun goes down." (Eccl 1:5) On this

basis, the Church's theologians declared that Galileo's sun-centered proposition was "philosophically foolish and absurd and formally heretical, since it expressly contradicts the doctrines of Holy Scripture in many places, according to their literal meaning and the common exposition and interpretation of the holy Fathers and learned theologians." These very words of the Pope's commission, first read in the seminary, scarred my mind as with a branding iron.

With that accusation, the Holy Office had grounds to brand Galileo a heretic. If he refused to recant, the Holy Office could hand him over to the civil authority for execution by fire, like Savonarola and Giordano Bruno and thousands more. So, the commissary-general of the Holy Office gave Galileo an absolute injunction "not to hold, teach or defend his opinion in any way, either verbally or in writing." Galileo surely felt like defying that arrogant judge. But he wanted even more to continue probing the sky to prove Copernicus's theory. Death could wait.

During sixteen long years, Galileo kept a low profile, making research at home with his telescope. He suspected that stars would play a role in resolving the sticky mystery of the earth revolving around the sun. He was right. Two hundred years later, in 1838, the German astronomer, Friedrich Bessel fixed his telescope for months on the star called 61 Cygni and observed its apparent motion on the celestial sphere. The only explanation for that parallax was the orbital motion of the earth around the sun.

As I continued my evening walk, I imagined how Galileo would have reacted if he himself had made that discovery in 1632. He would have rushed to the Vatican and the Holy Office and given the Pope and his entourage the good news. Then Galileo would have danced round and round the obelisk in Saint Peter's Square, chanting, "So moves the earth around the sun."

In 1632, however, Galileo had not yet discovered the definitive proof of Copernicus's heliocentric system. He had only indications that the earth revolved around the sun - enough to convince him but not the commissary-general of the Holy Office. Then one day, after sixteen years of forced silence, Galileo shouted, "Enough!" and published *Dialogue on the Two Great World Systems*. He did this not to spite the Pope, but to stir up further discussion and research on the subject. What he stirred up, however, was a hornets' nest in the Vatican.

Again the Pope sought counsel from theologians. Within days, they reported that Galileo had blatantly defied the Holy Office's order not to defend the theory of Copernicus. This time Galileo was not charged with heresy but with disobedience of the Church. Against the Church's command, Galileo had continued to believe and teach that the earth revolves around the sun. For this so-called crime, Galileo was restricted to house arrest for the rest of his life. In 1637, Galileo became totally blind. No more

telescope, no more stars; only darkness and frustration until his death in 1642. Feeling sad for Galileo and mad at the Church, I returned home, collapsed into bed and fell asleep.

The following night, the stars quickly rekindled my memory of their champion, Galileo. After publishing his *Starry Messenger* in 1610, he had a serious problem with the Church. Basically it was similar to mine: the Church's claim to absolute authority over God's revelation. We both wondered whether the Church really had the full right to determine what God had revealed and to defend her position as she saw fit. Galileo never resolved that problem before his death. But from the grave, by my recalling his struggle with the Church, he helped me find the solution.

Reflecting on the 4th

by Pauline Rocco

Today we celebrate what was truly the most pivotal event in our history, our Declaration of Independence from England's colonial empire. We should all take time to reflect on the meaning of what the founders accomplished for themselves and us. This was the first time in modern history that a colony was able to win its freedom from the controlling power. Imagine the courage it took for those patriots to look the British super power in the eye and say "no more."

The names Thomas Jefferson (who thought the Revolution) and George Washington (who fought the Revolution) still evoke respect and admiration around the world.

Fast-forward 229 years and what does the name George W. Bush evoke worldwide? More disdain than any other American leader in history. This is because the United States is now the world super power behaving like the British of 200 years ago. In his latest speech George the W. asked us all to fly flags on the 4th of July to show our support for the troops fighting for our freedom. The incongruity of that idea is mind-boggling, to say the least.

Ladies and gentlemen, the troops in Iraq are most assuredly not there "fighting for our freedom" nor are they there to "keep us safe." The people of Iraq are not now, nor have they ever been a threat to us. Jefferson, Washington, and the other patriots are admired worldwide for defying an empire—not for imposing one! Where once we were heralded as defenders of freedom, we are now denounced as an occupying power.

The Bushies and the neocons have our military at their disposal and they are using our troops to advance their own agenda for empire. It is an insult in the highest degree when these chicken hawks pretend to have America's best interest at heart. They have their own greed/power driven concerns guiding their actions. This Bush family dynasty of wealth and power is exactly what our founders warned us to beware of. It is what they pledged their lives, fortunes, and their sacred honor to overthrow.

If Washington and Jefferson came back, could you look them in the eye, considering what we ourselves have allowed the Republic to deteriorate into? We all fuss and fume about Bush's lies, but what do we do? When he fooled us once, the shame was on him. But when we allow him to fool us again (and again) the shame is ours.

Debunking the Bible and Pat Robertson

by Peter Murphy

I would like you to look at the following quote and consider that Pat is not the only person with such a view.

"It is interesting, that termites don't build things, and the great builders of our nation almost to a man have been Christians, because Christians have the desire to build something. He is motivated by love of man and God, so he builds. The people who have come into (our) institutions (today) are primarily termites. They are into destroying institutions that have been built by Christians, whether it is universities, governments, our own traditions, that we have.... The termites are in charge now, and that is not the way it ought to be, and the time has arrived for a Godly fumigation." -- Pat Robertson, New York Magazine, August 18, 1986

As can be seen from the above quote, people like Pat Robertson not only have distorted history, demonized nonChristians, but also advocate violence against those demonized. The fact that such people would so easily profess such a position only shows that the Bible is a book advocating intolerance and violence; the Bible allows one to hide their hatred behind "quotes." In order to debunk such decadents (a decadent being someone with defective ethics) as Pat Roberston, it is essential to debunk the foundation of his justifications -- the Bible.

If Deists and all Freethinkers wish to make the world safer, then it is necessary when the opportunity presents itself to debunk the Bible. One of the best tactics is to keep it simple. For example, when people asks me why I am not a Christian, I reply that Matt. 12:38-40 is reason enough not to be a Christian. In order for Jesus to fulfill Matt. 12:38-40, and not be a false prophet, he would have had to arise from the dead no earlier than the 4th day after his burial. But repeatedly we are told in the gospels that Jesus prophesied that he would rise "on the third day," contradicting his Matt. 12:38-40 prophecy, and we are told that he rose on the 3rd day after his death. If he rose on the 3rd day, then he could not rise AFTER the 3rd day which is prophecy of Matt. 12:38-40. So if the gospels are correct, then Jesus is a false prophet; on the other hand, if he rose after the 3rd day as the Matt. 12:38-40 prophecy states, then the gospels are wrong when they state he rose on the 3rd day. Jesus may have risen on or after the 3rd day -- but he did not rise on both the 3rd and 4th day. The problem of Matt. 12:38-40 needs to be preached from the housetops.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"Caretake *this* moment. Immerse yourself in its particulars. Respond to *this* person, *this* challenge, *this* deed. Quit the evasions. Stop giving yourself needless trouble."

"It is time to really live; to fully inhabit the situation you happen to be in now. You are not some disinterested bystander. Participate. Exert yourself."

"Respect your partnership with Providence. Ask yourself often, 'How may I perform this particular deed such that it would be consistent with and acceptable to the divine will?' Heed the answer and get to work."

"When your doors are shut and your room is dark, you are not alone. The will of nature is within you as your natural genius is within. Listen to its importunings. Follow its directives."

"As concerns the art of living, the material is your own life. No great thing is created suddenly. There must be time."

"Give your best and always be kind."

"Regardless of what is going on around you, make the best of what is in your power, and take the rest as it occurs."

"Practice having a grateful attitude and you will be happy."

Epicetetus

THINKonline! August 2005

Deistic Bible Study

by Robert L. Johnson

When Clarence Darrow arrived in Dayton, Tennessee in the summer of 1925 to defend the teacher who dared to teach his students about evolution, in what came to be known as the famous Scope's Monkey Trial, he saw huge signs that read, "READ YOUR BIBLE!". I think this is very good advice. People should read the Bible. It's only by actually reading it that you realize how foolish, mythical, illogical, and anti-God it really is.

When you look at the order and beauty in Nature and the Creation, your mind automatically goes to an idea of a Creator, a Designer, a creative Force or Power that people refer to as God. When you read the Bible, your mind struggles to make sense of it. You attempt to employ the full power of your God-given reason to "get the message", but it's impossible. There is no rhyme nor reason to the Bible.

The ancient Jews wrote much of the Old Testament, God had nothing to do with it. The ancient Jews appear to have been masters at psychological warfare. They knew how to pump up their own people and troops with verses like Deuteronomy 7:6 which has their god telling them they are "above all people upon the face of the earth."

After believing the lie that they are God's chosen ones, the ancient Jews were ready to cleanse the land of Gentiles and make it their own. In Deuteronomy 7:16 they were, and are, told by their Bible god, "And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy

God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them.” These two Bible verses can explain the root of the wars we are suffering from today.

Turning to ridiculous Bible quotes with a comical twist, one of the funniest is found at Exodus 4: 24 - 26 which has a foreskin being used like a Frisbee! It appears from this Bible story that the Bible god was going to kill Moses, but his quick thinking wife saved him by doing an instant circumcision on their son and flinging the child's bloody foreskin at either the feet of Moses or the feet of the Bible god. This satisfied the violent irrational Bible god and saved the life of Moses! LOL! And we think it's bad when a bully demands lunch money! I hope kids don't get more violent from going to Bible School!

Being Deists, we have much to offer the world that is under the yoke of the "revealed" religions. We need to take action that exposes the Bible and the various "holy" books for what they are. If we can educate people to the anti-God nature of the Bible, Koran, etc., we can accomplish much that will make the world a better place. It's up to us.

The below is taken from Ray's excellent book, My Life With God IN and OUT of the Church.

Nature Reveals God – Not the Bible

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

During the next 2 years, philosophy would teach me what the mind can know about the basic principles of being without using telescopes, microscopes and divine revelation. Later during theology, I would acquire knowledge based entirely upon revelations reputedly from God. For the moment, however, I must rely solely upon reason.

In his opening class, the professor reviewed what humans believed about the origin of the world for thousands of years before the first philosophers appeared in Greece during the fourth century BC. Over a million years ago, humans expressed their thoughts and feelings in spoken language. Their descendants communicated their beliefs and achievements to future generations - all by word of mouth.

Around 3000 BC the Sumerians, who lived along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, invented the art of writing which spread to other cultures and races. Now humans could record in stone and clay or on parchment and papyrus their thoughts including those about the origin of the world.

Without scientific instruments, just from visual observation, humans found no explanation for the world: lightning and thunder, earthquakes and typhoons, floods and drought. In society, things happened when rulers gave orders and when craftspeople got to work. In nature, beings that were smarter and more powerful than humans must be directing the elements and forces. To explain the mysteries of the world, the Sumerians created thousands of deities. So did the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians and most civilizations for thousands of years.

The first people to seek non-divine explanations for natural phenomena were Greek thinkers, such as Thales (547 BC), Anaximander (547 BC), Plato (348 BC), and Aristotle (322BC). According to Plato, the universe reveals design, purpose, and therefore a supreme architect.

Aristotle observed that nothing starts to exist by itself. Its existence depends on something or someone else. An infinite series of beings, each depending on another for existence, could never get started except by a being who needs no one or nothing for existence. We call that self-sufficient being God. Plato and Aristotle blazed a new trail for the pursuit of knowledge. Instead of running to the temple for answers about the world, humans should examine nature's elements and forces relying on intellect rather than on deities. During the next two years, I would follow the lead of Plato and Aristotle and probe the basic principles of being with my mind.

After much reflection, I reached the certitude that a powerful, intelligent and good being, who always existed, created the universe in which we live. This conviction is the foundation of my philosophy of life: my overall vision of and attitude towards life and the purpose of life. My life makes sense only because my belief in God is based not on revelations reputedly from God but on rational reflections upon the wonders of nature. Let me explain.

Walking through the woods one day, I picked up an acorn - a lowly nut with a lofty lesson. In the soil, the nut pops its cover. A tender stem emerges and evolves into a stately oak: trunk, branches and leaves. The acorn is an organism that, with common plant nutrients, develops not into a maple or birch or elm but into an oak - nothing else. The acorn is formed and fashioned that way. By what? Mindless matter or an intelligent force? By chance or design?

Later I examined a magnificent monarch butterfly. At first the original cell develops as a lowly caterpillar. After several weeks, the insect covers itself with a shell, becoming a pupa hanging by a thread from a branch. Later the insect breaks through its shell and emerges fully developed with exquisite black and golden wings. These paper-thin wings carry the butterfly from Texas to Canada every autumn and back again every spring. This amazing metamorphosis from seed-caterpillar-pupa to butterfly occurs without fail

because the seed is made that way. Again the question: what or who fashioned the seed? Mindless matter or an intelligent agent? By chance or design?

I asked myself this question many times. Finally I found the answer not in universities or libraries, not in observatories or laboratories, not in synagogues or cathedrals but in a crib. Better than scholars and scientists, better than preachers and teachers, a baby answered my question definitively.

A baby originates from a single cell which measures 0.00004 of an inch. Soon the zygote divides into two complete cells, each of which again separates, and these 4 subdivide into 8 and so on until the process systematically produces more than 10 trillion cells, of which 500 average-sized cells can fit within the following period. If each cell measured 1 cubic inch, a human adult would be as big as a building 1800 feet wide, 1800 feet deep, and 1800 feet tall.

Early in the cell-producing process, certain genes call for organ-forming proteins. These specialists soon fashion a heart that can pump blood, carrying nutrients and oxygen, to each of the baby's trillion cells. A fresh supply is critical. Without renewed oxygen, brain cells suffer damage within 4-6 minutes and certain death within 10. With a lifetime guarantee, this marvel of bioengineering beats about 72 times a minute or 103,680 times a day. And since each heartbeat delivers 2.5 ounces of blood into the arteries, the heart pumps 2025 gallons each day.

Keeping pace with the heart, the baby's lungs develop, not for immediate use, but for a surefire start when the newborn gasps for his first breath. Another masterpiece of engineering, the lungs inhale and store oxygen in 300,000,000 tiny sacs. Blood rushing from the heart passes through these sacs to collect fresh oxygen and distribute it to the body's multi-trillion cells. As the blood courses through the body, it also collects waste from every cell, flushing solids into the intestines and liquids into the kidneys, and depositing carbon dioxide in the lungs for exhalation.

But the most amazing and distinctively human organ is the brain. Only three weeks after conception, a brain appears as a tiny sheet of nerve cells, called neurons, and grows at a feverish pace creating millions of new cells each day. At birth they number 14 billion.

Since one neuron may form 5,000-50,000 connections with its neighbor neurons, the number of possible communication-points in the brain reaches 20,000,000,000,000. Through this system, the brain operates an integrated network reaching every organ and every cell deep inside our bowels, down to our fingertips and toes. The communication systems of AT&T worldwide cannot compare with the complexities and activities of one human brain. The brain can communicate not only sound, shapes and color but also smell, taste, pain, thoughts, love, and especially awareness and consciousness of them all.

Scientists have discovered that brain activity depends on chemical reactions and electrochemical energy. Since neurons receive and send signals not over wires but through organic matter, the messages are encoded in chemicals. But if a finger touching a hot stove had to wait until chemical reactions worked their way to the brain and back before receiving the pull-away command, the whole finger would fry to a frizzle. To speed up transmission, the first neuron to receive the alarm charges the signal with electrochemical energy. From that moment on, the message speeds along at 120 miles per hour.

Whoever admires a baby smiling and gurgling in his crib, whoever feels his heart beat and his lungs breathe, whoever foresees that this little guy will someday reason and love, whoever looks into his eyes has to believe that this baby's existence was planned, set in motion and guided by a supreme, intelligent being whom we call God.

During a philosophy class I asked the professor, "What impelled God to create the world?"

"For the answer," he replied, "you'll have to wait until next year. Theology will reveal the reason." But such a burning question required an immediate answer. I would test my newly found intellectual powers.

Often in the evening, I would relax alone on the flat roof and admire the stars, openings into heaven. Through these peepholes I looked for a glimpse of God. I remember asking him, "Why did you create the universe? For what reason? For what purpose?"

Before creating the first node of energy that exploded into our universe, God existed a long time. He got along quite well without us. He surely did not need us for anything. Then why create us?

For his amusement? I can see creating a few monkeys for laughs. But dour donkeys with hollow hee-haws? Humorless hippopotamuses? Snooty, stiff-necked giraffes? For fun? NO!

Did he create this world because he was lonely or bored? To keep busy? Just for the heck of it? A loud definitive "NO".

Surely not for the praise of flowers and trees, insects and birds, animals and fish - none of which can recognize God and praise his deeds. If for human praise, why create a world billions of years before any humans existed? Why the trillions of stars when a few would have served that purpose? Why blossoms in the unexplored forests of Brazil? Why fish beneath frozen Arctic seas? Why such a lavish creation beyond human perception? For the praise that God would receive from humans? If so, we surely let him down.

So many of us fail to admire the wonder of the world before our very eyes. We do not always see God's glory beyond the dazzling sunsets. The snowy mountains slopes do not always raise our minds and hearts to him. We watch graceful gazelles, brilliant butterflies, rainbow trout without seeing them as his handiwork. And when we do spend a few moments in prayer, our thoughts often center on our needs and desires. Before creating us, God must have known what to expect. Therefore, he cannot have created this grand universe for our scant and faint praise.

If not for our praise, then why did he create us? Could it be just to share his being? To give others a chance to exist and enjoy life? The weeping willow does not seem to enjoy life but it does not want to die. Neither does the cactus which survives in desert sand by absorbing the morning dew. Salmon enjoy swimming even when they must struggle up waterfalls to reach their spawning grounds. Who doubts that porpoises enjoy forming graceful arcs in and out of the water? Monkeys go crazy swinging from tree to tree. Lion cubs play like kittens. Goats hop for joy. Even we humans have fun and hold on to life tenaciously. No animal, no bird, no fish commits suicide nor do flowers and trees. Only a few humans choose suicide, usually in moments of dark despair. For most of us, life is worthwhile. If sharing his existence and life was God's purpose in creating the world, he succeeded well beyond our understanding.

God's purpose in creation is revealed in the way he fashioned all living creatures. He designed a mechanism in their genes to reproduce and share their being. The maple tree, besides producing syrup and colorful leaves, scatters thousands of winged seed every autumn. At the same time, the oak drops oodles of acorns; and the neighbor tree, its chestnuts. Watermelons provide seed for next year's crop. Fish lay millions of eggs in calm water; turtles bury theirs deep and safe in sandy shores. And man, not to be outdone by his fellow-creatures, deposits millions of sperm every time he makes love. Turtles and humans, maple trees and oak did not fashion their individual mechanism of procreation. Through nature, God put it in every living creature. It bears his imprint, his stamp, his label. It is God's way of ensuring the continuation of his creation and the realization of its purpose.

On earth, we call someone who gives abundantly to others without personal gain "good, goodhearted, generous and loving". We define love as "an unselfish benevolent concern for the good of others". This definition applies to God eminently since he created the entire universe apparently for no other reason than to share his being with us. To all creatures, he has given the greatest gift of all - EXISTENCE. Without it, we would be NOTHING. We would never enjoy starry skies and sunsets, flowers and animals and children. Nothing would exist without God's creative force, intelligence and goodness. My belief in this powerful, intelligent and good God gives meaning to my life and a purpose that hopefully harmonizes with his.

Forgive Us Our Testosterone

by Peter Murphy

Where does responsibility lie? This moral question is at the heart of many debates and controversies from religion to psychology to biology. The religious doctrines of Sin and Free Will are linked to placing the responsibility squarely on a willing sinner who has freely chosen evil over good. This paper will address this question and demonstrate that theological doctrines are ineffective and misleading, first by going into the doctrines in question and second by looking at the real world as revealed through science and reason.

To begin it is important to understand what the term, the Ghost in the Machine means, since this term is at the root of both the concepts of Sin and Free Will. The idea of a Ghost in the Machine is rooted in the archaic idea that the human body is merely a machine and that a Ghost (also known as a soul or mind) exists independently of the body yet controls the body much as a truck driver controls his rig. For those who may think that the phrase the Ghost in the Machine is something new, they should consider that it is rather an old idea and a relic of it still exists when we hear the euphemism, "he has given up the ghost."

The concept of Sin is somewhat complex and differs theologically among different revealed religions and even within the sects of those religions. At its simplest, it is the idea is that any act which is contrary to the divine order of things is a sin. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, God is believed to punish sin directly or indirectly, and their respective holy books are filled with examples of God's vindictiveness against sinful individuals and at times whole sinful nations (often over trivial affairs), and the only way to avoid divine punishment is to obey the divine mandates, which by the way means submitting to clerical authority. Many things identified as sinful are things that one cannot help but doing; for example, pride is not a conscious choice. There is a difference between and unacceptable desire and an unacceptable act.

Theologians have always realized the difficulty involved in the doctrine of Sin; they realize the value of a vindictive God (masquerading as a loving and merciful god) in controlling society and justifying clerical prerogatives is priceless, but they also realize that eventually people come to question the need for such a God or his rules. Even more damaging to theologians is that if God is omnipotent, omniscient, and

omnibenevolent, then how can God escape responsibility for sin? Two conflicting doctrines would develop to address this problem in Christianity.

The first is the doctrine of Predestination created by the "apostle" Paul. It is important to understand the basics of this doctrine to understand the doctrine of Free Will which was a reaction to it. The doctrine of Predestination is basically the idea that God is bigger and stronger than humans and can do as he damn well pleases; in effect, God's omnibenevolence only applies to a select few. God has chosen some to be saved, and created the unsaved so as to show the saved how much he loves them by punishing the unsaved with eternal hellfire; if someone doubts the "Biblical" truth about the above, they need only read, for example, Romans 8 and 9, Ephesians 1 and 2, and Revelation 13. The implication is that if God predestines some to salvation and some to damnation, then he predestined some to sin. The moral repugnance and perversity of this doctrine led to a reaction by St. Augustine. Augustine's take on the doctrine is highly confusing and he tries to have it both ways by watering down Paul and Revelations and shifting the blame. He accepts that God predestined the saved, but that the damned freely choose to be damned -- in effect blaming the victim. Even with these changes to the doctrine the stink remained because God was simply being a hypocrite by helping one side and ignoring the other not unlike a parent who loves one child and takes care of him, while abandoning the others. Catholic theologians, most notable St. Aquinas, attempted to then water down Augustine by suggesting that by predestination what is really meant is foreknowledge. In effect, God foreknew who would be saved and predestined these to join the Roman Catholic Church and partake of the necessary sacraments for salvation -- this caused much embarrassment for the papacy that John Paul II eventually conceded that it is just possible, ever so slightly, that God may grant salvation to a non-Catholic. So predestination is really three doctrines: Paul's hard predestination, Augustine's moderate predestination, and Aquinas's soft predestination. It is no surprise the Roman Catholic Church does not like to draw attention to predestination -- the whole doctrine, irrespective of the version, reeks of human pride and vanity.

The second is the doctrine of Free Will. Unlike the doctrine of predestination that is well supported scripturally, the doctrine of Free Will is purely theological construct. The idea behind the doctrine is that people are free to choose good or evil and that they are totally responsible for these choices. The advantage is that God is left off the hook. This is the doctrine that requires a Ghost in the Machine. The Ghost, or soul, controls the machine, or body, and freely makes choices between good and evil. As such, anyone who ends up damned brought it upon themselves. Both doctrines of Predestination and Free Will were used to justify inquisitions and witch burnings -- can anything else be expected from a religion of love?

The Bible contains a long list of sinful things, from eating pork to adultery. In the New Testament the Sins of the Flesh are the worst. The sins of the flesh can be broken down into Pride, Lust, Anger, and Dominance. The first three are states of being, while the latter can be either a desire or a state of control. Salvation or damnation within the doctrine of Free Will for the most part depend on what choices one makes in relation to these sins of the flesh.

So where does the responsibility really lie for these Sins of the Flesh? The real answer is in the flesh. There is no Ghost in the Machine because it is a scientific fact beyond any dispute that behavior is linked to the state of the brain. A person's decisions and behavior will change due to the state of their brain. Brain damage, chemical or physical stimuli changes brain function and behavior. Hormones determine not only what sex we are but how we think and behave. Both men and women produce the hormone testosterone. Men produce it in large quantities in the testis, women produce small quantities in the ovaries, and both men and women produce it in very small quantities in the adrenal glands. A number of scientific studies have revealed some very interesting statistics. Lust, anger, ambition, the desire for dominance, and even pride (a product of self-confidence) are clearly linked to testosterone. The levels of testosterone affect the levels of these "sins of the flesh." It is a fact that violent criminals have higher levels of testosterone than nonviolent criminals, and on average nonviolent criminals have higher levels than noncriminals. Trial lawyers and people in leadership positions have higher levels than people in subordinate positions. Among men and women, those with higher levels of testosterone tend to have more extramarital affairs. Depending on the levels of testosterone, lust can lead to rape, anger can lead to violence, the desire for dominance can lead to cruelty, and just pride can become vanity. People with short fuses often become angry, and when adrenaline enters the equation, violence can easily follow. Such people, if not suffering from brain damage or a birth defect affecting the brain, inevitably have higher than normal levels of testosterone.

Testosterone is a two-edged sword; we need it, but in moderate levels. Too little, and one becomes listless; too much, and one becomes overly active. A serial rapist can bring his compulsion to rape under control through chemical castration. Injections of Depo-Provera inhibits the release of androgens (testosterone) reduces the sex drive; it is no accident that serial rapists given this treatment shows a marked improvement in his behavior. The Roman Catholic Church could control the sexual predators, who seem to make up a noticeable percentage of their clergy, with Depo-Provera. This drug could help them keep their vow of celibacy. Although highly controversial, such a treatment may be a better alternative to dealing with criminals than long jail terms. So although it is illegal and unethical to experiment on people, it can be inferred from the available data that "moral" people could be made immoral if given sufficient testosterone to alter his behavior, and if given an overdose, such people may not even be able to help

themselves. The implications of this creates a great deal of anger in religious and ideological circles, but for those who have not closed their minds to uncomfortable scientific realities, know that this anger is itself the result of testosterone and the deep fear that it is true. People tend to become more angry with an uncomfortable truth than a comfortable lie. The author of this paper surmises that the testosterone levels of fundamentalist Christians is higher than in mainstream Christians. Rather these people like it or not, the influence of hormone testosterone on behavior is not merely a correlation, but a clear case of causation -- if someone wishes to be contentious of this reality, then they should take some time and do the research. A good place to start would be Steven Pinker's *The Blank Slate* and take it from there.

The conclusion from the above is that there is no Ghost in the Machine. There is no soul pulling levers behind human behavior. It is no accident that alcohol, drugs, and hormones can drastically affect the behavior of a person. Trauma to the brain can affect memories, thinking, and therefore behavior. The solution to moral problems lies in understanding how the brain works, and not in following Jesus Christ. Guilt is pointless, repentance is pointless, and prayer is pointless. If one's sexual urges are a problem, one does better to go get medical treatment than talking to a priest or minister. If more Catholic priests and Protestant ministers got treatment for their sexual problems, far less children would have their lives ruined by these "agents of god." Religion does a great disservice to humanity by diverting attention away from the real causes of human behavior for metaphysical mumbo-jumbo based in archaic ideas and the idolatrous obsession with theological theories and the Bible.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"For through your reason, you are able to understand nature's laws."

"Just as when you walk you are careful not to step on a nail or injure your foot, you should similarly take the utmost care not to in any way impair the highest faculty of your mind. The virtuous life depends on reason first and foremost. If you safeguard your reason, it will safeguard you."

"Let your reason be supreme."

"Don't surrender your mind."

Epictetus

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Faith of Our Fathers?

By Robert L. Johnson

Tradition plays a big part in the death grip Christianity and the other revealed religions have on us as individuals and as a society in general. That is because the nonsense that fills the "Holy Books" of the various revealed religions can't stand up to honest scrutiny. The religious leaders can always fall back on the empty mantra "it's tradition."

If people honestly questioned the revealed religions, the world would soon be majority Deist. A good example can be found in the Jewish religion. Orthodox Jews practice a sick and disgusting ritual called metzizah bi peh. This unnatural practice is part of yet another unnatural practice, the practice of circumcision. The practice of metzizah bi peh requires the rabbi to actually suck the blood from the infant's penis after the rabbi cuts off the foreskin!

This sickness in action seems to receive some validity because it's been a Jewish practice for 5,000 years!

A bad idea is a bad idea no matter how old it is! In the case of the blood sucking rabbis, a child [died](#) from herpes not long after the rabbi sucked the blood directly from his penis. The City of New York seems to be backing down on instituting a ban on this unnatural and dangerous practice due to the voting power of the rabbis - the politicians are scared!

If people openly and honestly questioned the revealed religions, disgusting practices such as this would soon come to an end. When we realize that Judaism was the first to start this insanity, and that Christianity and Islam sprang out of this irrational putrid religion, it makes sense that knocking out Judaism would progressively lead to knocking out the other two that are byproducts of Judaism. Then, our children would be safe from the deadly practices of the big three superstitions of the world. Before you know it, we may even be able to stop the Christian fundamentalists from killing their children by

withholding medical care for religious "reasons" due to their belief in the empty Bible promise of faith-healing.

The following article is taken from Ray's book My Life With God IN and OUT of the Church.

Inquisition

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

Looking for an answer, I began reviewing my Church history which I remembered vividly. I started my search in the twelfth century. In the year 1163, to root out a fast spreading heresy that denied Christ's human nature, Pope Alexander III got what he considered a brilliant idea. Judges appointed by the Church would conduct inquests to determine the innocence or guilt of people suspected of heresy. The judge would receive and examine the evidence and then absolve or condemn the accused. Answerable only to the Pope, the inquisitor's decision was final. Pope Alexander should have known that this absolute power would be horribly abused.

The succeeding Popes, Lucius III, Innocent III and Gregory IX, adopted Alexander's brainchild and nurtured it until it became the monstrous papal tribunal called "The Inquisition". The chief inquisitor, usually a Dominican or Franciscan monk, did not work alone. He used spies, jailers, and sergeants at arms to apprehend suspects. To obtain a confession of guilt, the inquisitor often resorted to artifice, deception and torture. After the trial, the inquisitor turned the guilty over to the State. Those who abjured their crimes received life imprisonment; the impenitent were burned to death. One inquisitor, Torquemada, had 2000 suspected heretics killed at the stake. This horrible institution lasted 700 years under 75 popes. Any of them could have abolished the Inquisition in three words: "close it down." No one did. If God was protecting the Church from error, how could he permit such cruel abuse of power, all in his name and for his greater glory!

Many Popes used the Inquisition to exterminate heretics and some, to eliminate critics, as did Pope Alexander VI who reigned between 1492 and 1503. When only 25 years old, Rodrigo Borgia became a cardinal and vice-chancellor of the Roman Church. There he amassed enormous wealth and bestowed benefices among the papal electors. After he became pope in 1492, he appointed 47 cardinals and positioned them strategically to expand his political power. For three of his many bastard children he arranged

marriages into the royal families of France, Castile, and Naples. To close such deals, he annulled any first marriage in the way. He was a great wheeler-dealer but also the worst Pope in history.

The Pope's scandalous conduct troubled the people but none more than the Italian Dominican Savonarola, a sincere preacher. After reforming the city of Florence, he tried to change the corrupt Roman Church. He condemned its decadence. To silence the fiery preacher, Alexander VI offered him a bribe, a cardinal's hat with its privileges and influence. Savonarola refused it. When all else failed, the Pope ordered his lackeys in the Inquisition to exterminate the pest. After weeks of cruel torture, they finally wrested a confession of heresy from Savonarola and handed him over to the civil magistrates for execution. From Rome, the Pope sent him a plenary indulgence. What a cruel joke! On May 23, 1498, Savonarola was hanged and his body burned. With the flames, his efforts to reform the Church went up in smoke.

As I compared Alexander VI and Savonarola with Christ, only one resembled him - the preacher, not the Pope. Jesus was chaste, indifferent to worldly possession and totally focused on God's glory and man's salvation. So was Savonarola but not Alexander. Jesus had denounced the "greed and self-indulgence" of the religious leaders and the priests. The vengeful priests then condemned Jesus of blasphemy and handed him over to the civil authorities for execution. Repeating history, the priests of the Inquisition condemned Savonarola of heresy and wrested his death sentence from the civil magistrate.

In grammar school the nuns told me that the Pope represented Christ. Then during 12 years in the seminary, priests pounded that idea into my brain. Now far away in Africa, I faced the fact that Pope Alexander VI was not a true representative of Jesus but a grotesque distortion of the poor and chaste Christ. Savonarola was the look-alike.

In the seminary, the priests also drummed into me the idea that the Pope was the highest authority on Christ's revelation, interpreting it with infallibility. Tonight while listening to the distant drums in the village below, I reviewed Pope Alexander VI's record. Clearly he never learned the ABC's of Christ's simple message. If he couldn't grasp Christ's explicit doctrine, how could he deduce dogmas from it and proclaim their truth with infallibility. Clearly the Pope didn't have the brains and the faith and love to do that. In my black mood that night, I wished that a universal church council had quickly deposed that incompetent immoral misfit and replaced him with a more Christ-like pope.

For over 300 years, the papal tribunal responsible for the murder of Savonarola and many others was called "The Inquisition"- a name that struck fear everywhere. In 1542, perhaps to whitewash the Inquisition's blackened reputation, Pope Paul III renamed it

the “Holy Office”. Despite this new sanctimonious name, the Holy Office continued its sinister game of hounding and harassing anyone who crossed the Church.

Thought Provoking Quotes

“If you want to live a wise life, live it on your own terms and in your own eyes.”

"Content yourself with being a lover of wisdom, a seeker of the truth. Return and return again to what is essential and worthy."

“Your will needn’t be affected by an incident unless you let it. Remember this with everything that happens to you.”

"Every difficulty in life presents us with an opportunity to turn inward and to invoke our own submerged inner resources. The trials we endure can and should introduce us to our strengths."

“Prudent people look beyond the incident itself and seek to form the habit of putting it to good use."

Epicetetus

"Any fool can make a rule, and any fool will mind it."

Henry David Thoreau

***THINKonline!* October 2005**

The Scandal of Pedophile Priests and Their Prelate Protectors

By Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

Early in life, millions of Catholics accept without question the following six religious beliefs. God created the world. Later a Jewish girl named Mary gave birth to Jesus who is divine like his Father in heaven. During three years, Jesus frequently healed people like the lame and the blind. After dying on a cross, he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. When his mother died, she joined him in heaven. After death all good people go to heaven and live forever without sorrow and pain. These core beliefs bring solace and hope to millions of Catholics.

Where and when are these beliefs instilled into the minds and hearts of Catholics? The majority first hear about God, Jesus and Mary at home from their parents. Then the parish priest takes over their indoctrination. At Christmas the priest celebrates the birthday of Jesus. The creche and the hymns in church rekindle that memory. Then every Sunday at mass, the priest recalls miracles of Jesus and his message of love. On Easter Sunday, the priest reminds the people that Jesus, after dying on the cross, rose from the dead. Forty days later, the priest recalls that Jesus ascended into heaven. On August 15, the priest celebrates Mary's Assumption into heaven. She too lives in heaven and answers prayers for help. Then on November 1, All Saints' Day, the priest assures his flock that those who loved God and their neighbors on earth now rejoice with God, Jesus, and Mary in heaven forever. Week after week, the priest in church keeps those beliefs alive in the minds and hearts of his people.

None of those mysteries, however, can be verified. They are accepted as true on the word of trustworthy persons. For example, as a child I fully trusted my good and loving parents. Later in the seminary during 14 years, I never doubted the kind and devoted priests training me for the priesthood.

Some years after my ordination, I became suspicious of the Pope's infallibility. I carefully reviewed the history of the Catholic Church. The bloody Crusades, the cruel Inquisition,

and the rampant immorality of the medieval popes and bishops proved beyond a doubt the fallibility of the Church. I lost confidence in the Church and its clergy. I no longer believed in the doctrines that I had accepted solely on their authority. At fifty years old, I left the Church and the priesthood in 1967.

The current scandal of pedophile priests does not match that of the medieval profligate popes. These miscreants shattered the confidence of sincere Christians who left the Roman Catholic Church in droves. The clerical crimes exposed this year will surely affect the faith of many Catholics. Some may be simply embarrassed and brush it off. Others will take to heart the conviction of criminal clerics and endure lingering doubts about other priests. This scandal will strike a fatal blow to the faith of many good people who will lose all confidence in the Church's sincerity, authority and teachings.

Having been deceived for so long by seemingly sincere priests, some people will be suspicious of all preachers of religion - and with good reason. None of these religious promoters can prove the truth of their teaching since there is no possible evidence of supernatural realities, events and places. Like the Catholic Church, other organized religions are based on reputed revelations of God to ancient persons and are preached by humans who demand blind faith from their followers.

Catholics who have lost faith in the Church can still believe in God. His existence is verifiable in nature. The designs, structures and laws in nature can be observed by humans. The physicist Einstein uncovered the universal law of relativity expressed as $E=MC^2$. The biologists Watson and Crick discovered the helix structures of DNA in cells. All humans can observe acorns evolving into oak trees and caterpillars changing into butterflies and single cells developing into babies. These beings and billions more reveal designs, structures and laws that did not come from nothing, nor by chance but from an intelligent Being. This Someone made what eventually evolved into our universe and nature.

After realizing that Nature manifests the existence of God, many people no longer need Holy Books and their purveyors to learn more about God. His works are everywhere in nature. Each and every creature on earth reveals that God exists and that he is intelligent and beneficent. A baby gurgling in his crib glorifies God more than priests preaching in pulpits. What the baby reveals about God is entirely believable: God exists.

This essay's first paragraph listed the core religious beliefs of Catholics. Nature does not testify to the divinity of Jesus, nor to his resurrection and ascension into heaven. Nature reveals nothing about Mary's Assumption into heaven nor anything about the afterlife whether in heaven for the good or in hell for the bad. But nature does manifest the first and most basic belief that God created the world.

The pedophile priests and their prelate protectors have totally discredited themselves and, to some extent, the Catholic Church - but not God. They could not cast doubt on God's existence and beneficence as evident in nature. God is not responsible for clerical scandals. He let them happen as he does earthquakes. These take place because of faults in the rock masses deep within the earth. Similarly moral scandals result from faults of individuals and institutions. After a devastating earthquake, many victims move away to quakeproof ground. A safe moral ground for people badly shaken by the scandal of pedophile priests is a personal relationship with God based on his wondrous works in nature.

The below is the first part of a four part series.

The Evolution and History of Morality

by Henry E. Jones, M.D.

I. Introduction:

Morality is a code of personal conduct. Morality provides a person with a standard by which good conduct is distinguished from bad. This standard, upon which right and wrong are judged, is of crucial importance.

A code of morality, incorporated into the human psyche, forms the conscience. So a code of morality is a system of beliefs, designed to guide a person in their choice of behavior. It is learned as a child, and maintained in the human mind as a conscience. Much of a person's motivation is derived from his conscience. Morality will therefore have a profound impact upon human psychology and thereby upon human behavior.

A human being has a biological, as well as a psychological need for a conscience. A code of morality has the biological equivalency of survival knowledge. Knowing what one may safely eat and what is poisonous is knowledge that is of survival benefit. The moral guidelines which make up a person's conscience are experienced by that individual as similarly important. Doing what is in accord with one's conscience is experienced as positive, successful behavior and doing what is in opposition to one's morality results in guilt and anxiety.

Most children will develop a conscience. And once an individual has incorporated a code of morality into his mind, and formed a conscience, it is extremely difficult to alter.

The nature of a person's morality, the nature of a person's conscience, in large part, will determine how that person behaves. Brain chemistry is affected positively by behavior in accordance with one's conscience. With human beings therefore, the nature and quality of their morality has a profound effect upon their happiness, success and prosperity. For this reason it is necessary that those who wish to influence the behavior of others begin with very young children.

II. Family Morality:

The earliest social unit developed by Homo sapiens was the family. Many animals live as family groups as did earlier humanoids. One or more men, one or more women and their children, lived and traveled together following the game, the weather, and the wild crops of edible plants. A simple natural morality may have developed implicitly among members of these ancient families.

A family is almost always autocratic. The strongest personality, the best leader, the strongest physically, the oldest or the wisest person in the group is generally in charge and makes most of the decisions. Just how much input other members have into the decision making process depends upon the family and the circumstances. There are undoubtedly many variations and subtleties in the power structure of families. Yet observations point to some near universal principles of family life.

First the concept of „the family“ is important. The idea of „one for all and all for one“ seems ubiquitous. The smallest unit of this may be the mother's commitment to her offspring. Next may be the commitment of the male or males to the women and children. Then we have the commitment of the children, including adult children, to their parents and seniors. Kinship, close blood relations, provides the basic cohesion in a family. This „family morality“ places commitment to the family as its highest value. Next is commitment to the family leadership through deference and respect. We can understand the necessity of honoring and respecting parents and elders. Of course it is necessary that stealing, attacking or killing family members be condemned and controlled. This requires rules of property. Finally there must be rules of sexual conduct. Using all these factors we can outline a „family morality“.

Supremacy of the family collective is the overarching principle. Each member of the family is expected to subordinate his interest for the good of the family collective. That „good“ is defined by the family leaders as that which they believe best serves the family's survival and prosperity. Thus the fundamental standard of the family morality is life. Survival, prosperity and life for the family and every member of the family, is the highest good.

Obedience to family authority is a requirement of family life. Parents and elders have succeeded at survival. It is important to the survival of the family especially its youngest, smallest and weakest members that the best knowledge be used in making decisions. Older generally correlates with wiser, and wiser decisions generally have a better chance of success. An individual's gender, age, strength of personality, prowess as a hunter or superior knowledge usually establishes him as the family leader. For these, as well as other reasons the family leader is usually the father, or a father. Respect and reverence for elders and senior family members encourages adherence to their leadership. Obeying the leader is crucial to the family's survival.

The struggle for physical survival is the family's fundamental task or mission. It is a team effort. Cooperation is a key to success. Fighting a fellow family member violates the family morality. Only extremely rare and carefully considered circumstances allow a family to kill a member. The unwritten and usually unspoken contract is „one for all and all for one“. An individual does not attack a fellow family member; in return other family members do not attack him. Each member helps the other family members succeed in their survival struggles. This is what the family is all about.

Most family property is owned as an undivided partnership. It is a cooperative or commune and most property is owned collectively. The control and use of family property is not distributed equally. Family leadership determines who shall use what property. Every family recognizes property used in common, and property controlled and used by the individual family members. The common property might be a cave or cooking pit. Property controlled and used by an individual might be a spear or knife. Prohibition against taking the property assigned to other family members also has its basis in survival. Without prompt access to one's weapons a situation might occur that could lead to injury or death. Trade, barter or sale of property is generally taboo among family members. Those who have should give to those who have not. If younger, weaker members need something, the older, stronger members should get it for them. The „family contract“ is „from each according to their ability, to each according to their need“.

For any family to get along and function as a unit there must be rules regarding sexual behavior among its members. If this is not done passions, envy and jealousy may set family members against one another. The males of animals spend a lot of time fighting over mates. This sometimes leads to injury and occasionally to death. Powerful reproductive urges threaten the cohesion of the family. If there are not clear rules governing sexual behavior and if the rules are not obeyed, the family may come apart. It is more important that there be rules and that they are obeyed, than that any particular rules be adopted. The range of sexual behaviors demonstrated by different groups at different times show the wide latitude of sexual mores that will work. But there are no examples of families that have endured for long with no sexual mores at all.

Cooperation is necessary if the family is to act successfully as a unit. Only two ways of motivating human behavior have ever been discovered. They are „pain“ and „pleasure“ or perhaps better said, „reward and punishment“. Punishment may be verbal or physical and both are necessary in raising children. The pain part of family life can at times be intense. The greater number of loyal, strong adults a family can maintain the better. There is always the possibility and threat of people leaving the family and striking out on their own. It is more likely that a strong member will leave than a weak one. The family morality is „from each according to their ability, to each according to their need“. According to this family code the strong members look-out for the weaker members. New mothers have the ability to satisfy their infant's nutritional needs. Women have the ability to satisfy the men's sexual needs. Men have the ability to satisfy women's sexual and security needs. From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs, makes good sense to an infant, pregnant woman or frail senior. It is not obvious what those who are filling the needs of the less able are getting out of the family arrangement. What keeps the family together over time? What provides the cohesion that holds the family together? Why do those with ability not abandon those who are needful?

The answer is pleasure. Satisfaction, understanding, comfort, safety, identity and emotional nourishment are different kinds of pleasure that the close human relationships of family life provide. If the „pleasures“ of family membership, for a particular individual, outweigh the „pains“, he will probably remain loyal to the family. His loyalty may dissipate if „pain“ persists greater than „pleasure“. He may leave or betray the family if opportunity presents itself. Therefore the thing that provides the cohesion in a family is the pleasure it provides. Understanding please, the very broad definition of „pleasure“ I employ. The family consists of mutually interdependent relationships where every member provides „pleasures“ of varying kinds to other members. Not all of these „pleasures“ are of direct survival benefit. The care of a newborn infant might be viewed as providing for the future survival of the family. It would be difficult to make such a case for the care of a dying senior and their careful burial. From the standpoint of a family providing „pleasure“ we can better understand such behavior, and appreciate its survival benefit. Loyalty to the family morality is in the best interest of every member of the family. This is very important. Families do not generally stick together, and stick by the family morality, out of altruistic motives. The relationships among the members of a family are a complex, continuously changing, ongoing series of trades. No one is doing anything for nothing. Everyone is getting what he negotiates to get out of the family enterprise. A successful family survives over time because it is in each individual's long-term self-interest to be loyal to their family, and to the morality of family life.

To survive, to live, is the primary task of the family. Its goal is to survive in the present and across time into the distant future. The values outlined above are all directed

toward this goal. I have called these values the „family morality.“ I have tried to show that this „family morality“ grows out of the biological and psychological facts of human nature. Note that the fundamental standard of this „family morality“ is life! Every aspect of this „family morality“ is directed toward enhancing the chances of each and every member surviving and prospering. Notice to that very little coercion or force is required to hold such families together. Everyone’s selfish self-interest works automatically to uphold the family. Likewise no didactic instruction is needed to teach children the family morality, it develops naturally. The family morality grows naturally right out of the reality of human biology and psychology and requires little or no force to inculcate or maintain it. In the minds of these ancient humans their conscience judged as „good“ those behaviors which benefited their life and their family. I am sure that they would consider actions detrimental to their life and that of their family not only „bad“ but stupid as well.

200,000 years ago, at the beginning of the Homo sapien family, these principles were implicit, unstated, assumed and unquestioned. Maybe at some point in time some parent said to his youngster something like this. “We took care of you when you were an infant and raised you to be the strong child that you are. You are an important part of this family. We need you to obey our rules and do your part of the work around here. This family is a team. It’s a „one for all and all for one“ arrangement. But someone has to be the leader, and that’s me. Nobody likes all the family rules all the time, but we each subordinate our individual desires for the sake of the family. So I ask you to examine your attitude, get with the program, pitch in and become a cooperative member of this family.” Countless parents, in thousands of different languages over millennia have undoubtedly repeated a similar exhortation. What are the elements of this „family morality“?

Elements of the Family Morality-

- (1) Purpose: This morality is directed toward what is best for the individual and his family. Happiness of all in the family is its purpose.
- (2) Highest Good: The highest good according to the family morality is survival, health, and success.
- (3) Methodology: The family leadership leads through knowledge, example, and strength. Example and instruction are the methods employed to impart this morality. Note that no didactic instruction or teaching institution is employed to propagate this morality.
- (4) Psychology: The psychology of the family morality is simple openness, truthfulness, and transparency. No deception, or self-deception, is necessary for adherence to this morality. Clear honesty, free of affectation is the psychology of the family morality.
- (5) Metaphysics: From what we can discern from anthropological evidence, these early peoples viewed God as the natural world. The universe, the world, reality,

these are all words for their God. God is a natural God. God's laws are permanent; they do not change, and are learnable through trial and error. Trial and error in modern parlance is science and reason. This is deism in its basic form.

This is the family morality. This morality is relatively free of mythology. Grounded in concrete physical reality there is less need for an elaborate mythology.

The author, Dr. Jones is, refreshingly, a reason based psychiatrist. He doesn't buy into the crutch that problems such as addiction, etc. are based on genetics. What we decide to do is our own choice.

What Did Jesus Sacrifice?

by Peter Murphy

Here is a challenge to believers and the Holy Spirit that supposedly guides them.

Christian mythology maintains that Jesus sacrificed himself willingly for the sins of humanity and that he ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. Christians even go so far as to maintain that Jesus was totally God and Man.

Before we go any further we need to determine: what is a sacrifice? A sacrifice means to permanently lose something of value. One is poorer for the sacrifice. To sacrifice is to lose something.

In light of what sacrifice means, I challenge any Christian to show me what Jesus sacrificed. What did Jesus permanently give up; what did he do that left him poorer for the sacrifice?

The only sacrifice that comes to my mind is Jesus sacrificing the pleasure of torturing us for all eternity for not obeying his impossible teachings. For example, in a single chapter (Matt. 18) a mere four verses apart Jesus gives contradictory teachings to Peter about forgiveness; he tells Peter to treat the offending brother as a tax collector and in effect no longer speak to him, then he reverses himself and says to forgive seventy times seven -- it is impossible to do both -- it is an contradictory teaching.

New York City Violates Separation of Church/Synagogue and State

by Robert L. Johnson

The Deist Thomas Jefferson was the one who coined the phrase "a wall of separation between church and state". Mayor Bloomberg has smashed through the Jeffersonian wall out of political fear.

In a case that involves a rabbi transmitting herpes to an infant by orally sucking the blood from the baby's circumcised penis and in which case the baby died from the infection, the Mayor of New York City was faced with doing what's right and outlawing this insane and disgusting and unnatural and dangerous practice or caving in to the revealed religion of Judaism. He choose to do what is wrong and allow the decision to be made by a Jewish religious court!!! The Mayor is not only condoning and promoting this ancient barbaric superstition, he is also setting a precedent of destroying the American way of life! If a Jewish religious court can decide what laws stand on this matter, why can't they do it in other matters? Over seven years ago I wrote an article for the hard copy of *THINK!* predicting that if the religious right was not stopped we'd eventually have ecclesiastic courts added to our judicial system, as it was prior to the American Revolution. Bloomberg has taken that first deadly step and the media doesn't cover it. America cannot function as intended without a totally free press and media. I guess that's a key reason the America envisioned by Jefferson and the other founders has died a gradual and creeping but final death.

Is this what we want? Do we want superstition and ignorance to rule not only in the revealed religions, but in our judicial system as well??? Help us take the fight to the enemies of reason by subscribing to our monthly Deist ezine for ACTIVE Deists, [Deistic Thought & Action!](#) while you still can!

To Your (Mental) Health!

by Pauline Rocco

It is staggering to consider the debilitating impact on the human psyche that religious dogma has imposed for the past two thousand years. It is not surprising that during the time of Christian domination so little progress was made. Children were taught from the cradle that they were born in sin and could only be saved by the grace of God. The most terrible tragedy was the imposition of the idea that human nature is evil and humans need to struggle to overcome their own nature.

With the dawning of the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment some people came to realize that the dogma was a lie. But the process of enlightenment is really a work in progress. Most people are still steeped in the false values of revealed religion and its negative view of humanity.

The good news is that as the truth of nature becomes known, it becomes more difficult for preachers and politicians to fool people. Have you ever wondered why preachers and politicians have far more time on television than scientists do? Scientists aren't in the business of trying to control people, extort money from them, or send their children to war.

Understanding human nature from a scientific viewpoint enhances mental health, because science tells the true story of life—not some dogmatic mind-bending guilt trip. Evolutionary scientists do an excellent job of explaining how, through the process of natural selection, our survival strategies developed. Deists should be leaders in advocating an understanding of human nature based on the reason of science.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. Men will believe what they see."

"He enjoys true leisure who has time to improve his soul's estate."

"Every man is the builder of a temple called his body."

"What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

"Nature will bear the closest inspection."

Henry David Thoreau (Taken from www.strike-the-root.com)

"In short, there's so much probability, any Worship which subsists on a Falsehood, will one time or other degenerate, that we shou'd never give Quarter to Error, of what kind, or on what Pretences soever. I own the Scandal's less in encountering Errors before a long Possession has given them root in the Minds of Men, than when Antiquity has confer'd on them a kind of sacred Character. But as there's no prescribing against Truth, 'twere the highest Injustice to leave it continually bury'd in Obscurity, on pretence it never yet had seen the Light."

Pierre Bayle

"And how much more encouraging to the achievement of science and improvement is this, than the desponding view that the condition of man cannot be ameliorated, that what has been must ever be, and that to secure ourselves where we are, we must tread with awful reverence in the footsteps of our fathers. This doctrine is the genuine fruit of the alliance between Church and State; the tenants of which, finding themselves but too well in their present condition, oppose all advances which might unmask their usurpations, and monopolies of honors, wealth, and power, and fear every change, as endangering the comforts they now hold."

Thomas Jefferson, Report on University of Virginia

***THINKonline!* November 2005**

Intelligent Design v. Creationism

by Robert L. Johnson

Intelligent design is in the news a lot lately. It's being pitted against evolution. As a Deist, I see evolution as part of the intelligent design and strongly believe that the debate should be intelligent design versus creationism.

Intelligent design gives Deists and free thinkers a great weapon against the degrading superstitions of the Bible and the Quran. Both "holy books" go directly against our God-given reason in their teachings about the creation of the earth and mankind. By using intelligent design we can point out these ridiculous claims made by the revealed religions. If underhanded creationists and revealed religionists are trying to use intelligent design as a back-door approach to replacing evolution with creationism in schools, by attacking creationism with intelligent design we can eliminate that threat.

In order to demonstrate that intelligent design, by its very name, can have absolutely nothing to do with the revealed religionist stories about creation, we can point out the many flaws in the Genesis account of creation. Here's a link to the Skeptic's Annotated Bible (and Quran) that is loaded with facts and information that makes it perfectly clear that an Intelligent Designer could have nothing at all to do with the Bible and Quran myths of creation. We can all study and use these factual arguments to show how foolish the Bible and Quran stories are, and that they have nothing to do with reality and/or intelligence.

It's important that each of us DOES something to spread the word about Deism and point out that believing in a myth does not bring you any closer to Nature's God. Most people don't know there is such a thing as Deism. It's up to use to educate them that they're not trapped in a box where there are only two options: to believe in the nonsense of the revealed religions or to believe in the nonsense of atheism. I've received many emails and letters from people who are ecstatic to learn that there is a true reasonable alternative to the nonsense, which is Deism.

The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving in 1621

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

In 1535, King Henry VIII broke with the Papacy sloughing off many of its dogmas and regulations. His Church of England, however, remained heavily laden with rituals. In time, a number of English people considered these rites superficial and superfluous. So they separated from the Church of England, still holding on to the Bible for divine inspiration. Many settled in Holland while a small group headed for America.

In September 1620, the 80 foot ship "Mayflower" began her historic voyage across the Atlantic with 102 passengers squeezed aboard. After more than two difficult months at sea, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth on December 21, 1620. As soon as they stepped ashore, they offered thanks and praise to God.

That first winter, the Pilgrims faced extreme hunger and disease. At times, only six or seven people were well enough to care for the rest. Half of the group died. Of the 17 male heads of families, ten died during the first infection; of the 17 wives, only three were left after three months. The Pilgrims faced extinction.

Surely the Pilgrims remembered that God had provided manna each morning to the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land. What the Pilgrims needed most was someone to show them how to exploit the resources of this foreign land. The Pilgrims did not demand an angel or someone like Moses. Any one would do.

When Spring arrived, so did a native Indian called Squanto. He knew the land and he had learned English for purposes of trade. He volunteered his assistance to the desperate Pilgrims. He taught them how to plant corn and squash and how to fish and hunt. Squanto showed the Pilgrims how to tap maple trees for sap, how to dig eels from the mud at low tide, and which plants had medicinal power. Under Squanto's direction, the Pilgrims worked hard and reaped a rich harvest.

In a spirit of thanksgiving, the Pilgrims decided to celebrate their survival through the first year and thank God for the abundant yield of crops. The governor of their tiny colony, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to God and invited the neighboring Indians to share in their festivities. King Massasoit, the leader of the Wampanoag Indians, came with 90 warriors and enough venison for the three day celebration.

One eye witness reported that the Pilgrims and Indians engaged in various games and races. Both groups showed their hunting skills: the Indians with their bows and arrows; the Pilgrims with their muskets. Four English women and three girls did all the cooking. The food available included: turkey, venison and ducks; oysters, clams and fish; pumpkins, cranberries and corn.

No historian mentions any religious ceremonies and communal prayers. The Pilgrims, who praised and thanked God that day, did so in their minds and hearts.

Inspired by the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving, George Washington in 1789 proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving; so did Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and every President since then. In mid-November, President George W. Bush will declare November 28 a national day of Thanksgiving. He will urge all Americans to celebrate this holiday, as the Pilgrims did, saving a moment or more to praise and thank God for his blessings. Millions will join in this grand alleluia chorus honoring Nature's God.

The below article is the second part of a four part series.

The Evolution and History of Morality

by Henry E. Jones, M.D.

III. The Morality of “revealed” Religions:

For the first 180,000 years of Homo sapien existence there were no large population concentrations or cities. There were no large tribes or nations. This was before the discovery of bronze or iron and before the domestication of farm animals and the development of agriculture. At the time our predecessors had only fire, stone and bone tools, and their dogs. Human beings were nomads. They traveled after game in small family groups, occasionally as extended families or clans. These families devoted their time to hunting, fishing, preparing caves and huts, and searching for wild berries, nuts and vegetables. They cared for their sick and respectfully buried their dead.

During certain seasons and for certain events several families might unite and cooperate for a limited period of time toward some common goal. Typically such cooperation was for trade, or for a big hunt. But after the big event people would disperse and return to their separate family lives. Then about 20,000 years ago, before the invention of the bow and arrow or the wheel, our species rather suddenly began to display a capacity for social organization not previously apparent.

Somewhere around 600 to 1000 generations ago a great change occurred in the organizational behavior of our ancestors. People began to organize into large groups and they began to accomplish big projects. At the time the

only source of power was human power. The dog may have provided some motive force over snow and ice, but his strength to pull a slide through the forest was more limited. The challenge was to organize large numbers of humans, inducing them to combine their physical strength toward accomplishing some goal. Such organizational complexities as building pyramids or temples and conducting military campaigns could then be undertaken. Whoever managed to turn large groups of human beings into successful manpower machines had a force that could really do things and bring about change in the ancient world. Whoever discovered or invented a way to accomplish this feat of organization would wield great power.

Around 20,000 years ago a method began to slowly emerge that provided the means to such organization. Whether this was accomplished by one or a few individuals, or resulted from the efforts of thousands we cannot tell. We do believe that it developed independently among many different peoples around the globe. And we know that it was accomplished by creating the institution of slavery. Slavery probably occurred sporadically earlier than this, but it too was organized at this time. Whether incidental to, or as a result, rapid technological advancement got underway once slavery was institutionalized. Slavery required the invention of a special tribal morality.

Slavery is a state of mind. It may or may not involve physical hardship, but it always requires acceptance. The slave is first and foremost enslaved by his beliefs. A people can be incarcerated by force, but only psychological seduction, an alteration or modification of their morality, can induce them to accept slavery. A slave needs a slave morality. Until an individual acquiesces mentally to his enslavement he may be a prisoner, perhaps a prison worker, but not a slave. Once a person accepts the moral premise that he should sacrifice himself for the benefit of others, then he is truly a slave. A special morality was designed to create a person who would put his labor and his life at the tribe's disposal. This of course means placing one's life and labor in the hands of a chief or ruling elite. A method of producing such slave psychology was invented! That invention was the Tribal Morality of self-sacrifice. Once a child accepts the morality of the slave in principle, then accepting his fate of being ruled by others is a feat accomplished.

At least twenty millennia have passed since the first Homo sapien became a slave to another. Once the technique of producing slaves by teaching children the Tribal Morality was discovered it then spread very rapidly throughout the world. Institutions to teach the tribal morality, to program children to be subservient to tribal authority, spread rapidly to all corners of the globe. This 'mind control' and enslavement of the masses was institutionalized around the world. The production of slaves was undertaken on an assembly line basis. Those tribes that were able to produce the most, and the best disciplined, slaves had a strategic military advantage over those peoples who did not.

The discovery of the psychological methods of producing slaves resulted not only in the creation of millions of slaves, it actually brought about the creation of the 'tribe', promoted the development of agriculture, spurred the growth of 'cities', and fostered the appearance of 'civilizations'. This 'invention' of the Tribal or slave morality also initiated 20 thousand years of societal evolution. The survival of tribes depended upon their organizational prowess. Thus the first strategic military technology over which societies fought to gain supremacy was the techniques of indoctrinating their populations in this special morality of slavery. Those tribes' best at exploiting the organizational potential of slavery dominated or destroyed those less able. The discovery of this slave morality resulted in societal changes of tremendous importance. Indeed the mutation of genes which created our species 200,000 years ago is the only event in the development of our species that out-ranks in significance this invention of Tribal Morality of 20,000 years ago.

From the standpoint of a person who wished to be the ruler of his group the discovery of the method of producing slaves was a marvelous development. The task which faced ancient rulers prior to the discovery of this morality was in getting people to cooperate. Persuasion is time consuming and uncertain. Getting individual human beings to subordinate their needs to those of a large group appeared an impossible task. No tribe is sustainable for long if each family goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A leadership hierarchy was not possible and there were few followers when everyone was thinking primarily of themselves. Animals live to satisfy their own biological needs, as did early humans. Early man did not live to enhance the survival of a tribe or its ruling elite. The task of these would-be leaders was to get Homo sapiens to place the survival and welfare of the tribe, and its ruling elite, over their own personal interest. People had to be trained to sacrifice their personal interest to those of the tribe. As we know this was accomplished, but it was not easy. Let's reiterate the problem facing a would-be chief or king.

As I have mentioned, early humans congregated occasionally for special activities such as trading and the hunting of large animals. Such events would bring families together in peaceful cooperation. These activities were usually of relative short duration. Afterward the families returned to their nomadic, isolated and separated lives. The joining together of many families to form clans and tribes, let alone cities and nations, presented a very big problem. How was a large organization of many family units to be forced to cooperate on a project or mission of a leader's choosing? What could be used to make people obey a ruler and support a ruling class? How could a ruler get people to go against their own personal interest and do what a king wanted them to do? The only solution was to change people's motivation. To accomplish such a huge change in a person's motivation you must change their morality! Only by inculcating an obedience morality, or slave morality, into the minds of the masses can you get them to subordinate their will to yours. How might early man have invented this slave or tribal morality?

It was natural that the same principles that worked for family cooperation be used to encourage cooperation among many families. On the surface it may seem simple enough to create a clan or tribe by applying the principles of the 'family morality' to a larger group. The problem however is that the pleasures of family life rest upon the close emotional bonds created by intimate physical contact. As a group increases in size, the size itself works against social cohesion. Family cohesion requires close daily physical contact with members of the group. Although some chiefs tried magnificently to be the actual as well as the titular father of their tribe this has a natural limit. As the number of people in a group increases, daily physical contact becomes increasingly difficult and ultimately impossible. It's one thing to respect and obey your family leader, your biological father, the one you know, see and work with every day and sleep near at night. It's another thing to honor and obey a chief that you may seldom see and never talk with. The opportunities for mischief are great when there are many people and the rules of your family morality do not apply to most of them. Think of the problems the police have in a large modern multiethnic city. The leader of a tribe does not have the bond of family intimacy, the constant physical contact to promote a family morality and thereby create the cohesion and obedience he desires. He needs somehow to create a substitute, some way to legitimize his claim to authority. In a family the love and affection the father has for family members is real. It is based on real, physical pleasure. Likewise the love and respect the family members feel for the father is real. It is based upon real love, real dependency and real need. What a chief or tribal leader needs is the same type of relationship to the members of his tribe that a father has to members of his family. How can a chief get the masses to love, honor and obey him when it is impossible for him to have a daily, physical, intimate relationship with each and every member?

The task for a chief of a large group of families is to exploit the human imagination and create an artificial, abstract or conceptual 'father'. He will also have to convince all the families that a 'tribe' exists and that it is a family. The fact is that the 'tribe' is not a family and the chief is not the father of the tribe. But he must promote himself as a 'super' father, head of the 'tribe' which he promotes as a 'super family'. The 'tribe' is an abstraction that does not

truly exist in the sense we speak of it here. In reality a 'tribe' is a group of families, not one huge family. The chief must get everyone to ignore their direct perception of this concrete reality and adopt the abstract concept. He will need to produce a compelling story. This story will have to powerfully stimulate everyone's imagination. The plot might be 'the chief has saved the tribe from a great danger, the danger remains, and we praise the chief's heroic actions. The tribe should plead for the chief's continued protection. Everyone must pledge obedience to the chief, the father and protector of this great family, the tribe'. The story-line varies from culture to culture. The more graphic and fantastic the story-line is the more it sticks in the imagination. This 'story' and its accompanying imagery are designed to give each individual tribal member the feeling of belonging to this larger 'family.' And of course if he feels he is part of this large abstract 'family' he will apply the same family morality that he applies to his real family to the tribe. He will transfer love, respect, loyalty, and obedience that he has for his real father onto his abstract 'father', the chief. The 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need' family commitment becomes the abstract tribal concept we can call the 'social contract.'

Even if much of the chief's story is true at the beginning of a tribe's history, it will over time through elaboration and enhancement become a myth. Thus we will have the beginning of a mythology in support of political power. This mythology will of course include the family morality. The family morality applied to the entire tribe, is the slave morality. Its invention might have been no more complicated than that.

The tribe may look to a casual observer very much like simply a very large family. As we have observed, however, profound and critical differences exist. Let's compare the two. The cohesion of a family comes from real pleasures based on real physical relationships. The cohesion holding the tribe together is abstract or conceptual. The cohesion of a family comes from biological needs perhaps enhanced by myth. The cohesion of the tribe is derived almost exclusively from a mythology. Cohesion in a family rest on biological needs which lead to an interdependency rooted in reality, always present, continuously reinforced, and difficult to extinguish. Thus family loyalty is based on self-interest. Tribal cohesion on the other hand relies on mythology. The 'social contract' relies upon this mythology. This mythology exists in the imagination of tribal members and is effervescent. It can quickly dissipate. It requires regular ritualized reinforcement. And tribal cohesion relies upon the slave morality of self-sacrifice. The morality of self-sacrifice is much less dependable than the morality of self-interest. It helps if the tribal leadership can make self-sacrifice appear to be in everyone's self-interest! Therefore threats and dangers to the tribe, or perceived threats and dangers, can be helpful.

The individual's survival does not depend upon the tribe, but the individual must be made to believe that it does. The tribe or nation must perpetually maintain a crisis, or the impression of one. An ever-present danger looming nearby is helpful. Other tribes or nations are often truly a threat. The chief and his ruling elite are never more needed than when there is danger. And certainly during times of crisis all tribal members can be expected to sacrifice for the tribe even more. Thus loyalty to the tribe, and loyalty to the 'social contract,' requires that the individual sacrifice his needs and interest to the concerns, interest, and needs of individuals and families he does not know. This tribal morality requires that he sacrifice his own self-interest for the sake of 'others', the tribe or nation. Sacrifice for the tribe is also sacrifice for the ruling class. This subordinating, or denying of one's life to the agenda, purposes, and betterment of others, is by definition, slavery. Thus it is easy to see that the tribal morality of self-sacrifice is the morality of slavery.

The political power of a ruling class over its enslaved population is based on a mythology. So the ruling class must see to it that the mythology is maintained. Rituals, passion plays and theater of all kinds must be staged at frequent and regular intervals to reinforce the natives in their commonly held beliefs. Rituals of the tribes' mythology strengthen each person's commitment to their slavery, to the tribe and its leadership. It is these commonly held myths that hold a tribe together and unify the many families under one concept. Children must be

instructed in this tribal heritage. This is where the ability to sell, and repeatedly resell, these abstract concepts to the masses becomes important. Rituals expounding the tribal mythology must be conducted frequently. The chief and his ruling class use mythology to create a proper 'image'. Such 'image making' may develop to the point where the leader of the tribe is deified. A combined mythology may be created, legitimizing and deifying a 'ruling elite' the 'great family'. Tribal origin and deifying myths are often combined into a defining tribal mythology. What is crucial is the promotion and reinforcement of the morality of self-sacrifice. Without the morality of self-sacrifice the social contract cannot be maintained. Only the morality of self-sacrifice will promote enslavement of the masses to the needs of the tribe and its rulers. The morality of self-sacrifice produces the psychology of slavery. Such slavery has provided 20,000 years of tribal rule.

Not just the masses identified as slaves are actually slaves. What really exist are just different classes or categories of slaves. There are slaves de jure and slaves de facto. Everyone in the tribe is in fact enslaved by their belief system, their tribal morality. The chief or king, and his ruling elite believe as much in the morality of slavery as do the explicitly identified slaves. Only they believe in it with a twist. The ruling elite believe in the morality of self-sacrifice, but they believe it applies to everyone except them! They believe that they, because of divine right, or because they were elected by the majority, should exercise the power to sacrifice others for their own benefit. It is the other side of the coin. The slaves are sacrificed for the good of the tribe, i.e. its rulers. Slave and slave-master, chief and braves, king and subjects, these are interdependent relationships, each side dependent upon the other. Don't misunderstand; I am fully aware that the identified slaves do almost all the sacrificing and suffering. I am just pointing out that everyone from the king or chief on down share the tribal or slave morality. And the king or chief is, in many ways, no more free than the slaves.

As the tribe increases in size the more grandiose and elaborate the myths must be to support tribal cohesion and the rigid organization of the tribe. At some point it becomes crucial that the extensive values, rules and myths of the tribe be taught to children in a formal and explicit manner. A formal system for teaching the young in the mythology of the tribe is instituted. We can label any system of societal cohesion that relies upon these elements as 'tribal'. Tribalism then is any form of social structure that relies upon a mythology in support of self-sacrifice for cohesion.

Attributes of Tribal Morality –

- (1) Purpose: To produce the slaves, the motive power or energy to do things leaders want done. The purpose of tribal morality is to produce the slave mentality. The purpose of this morality is to produce the proper slave psychology and thereby provide slaves for the tribe or nation.
- (2) Highest Good: The welfare of the collective, which of course means, whatever is good for the ruling elite. The welfare of the tribe or nation takes precedent over the welfare of the individual or his family. The individual and the separate family units are expected to sacrifice their needs, desires, goals, property, ambitions, even life, for the sake of the tribe and its leadership. The tribe is promoted as the basic unit of survival. The tribal contract is 'everyone must sacrifice for the tribe and its rulers.'
- (3) Methodology: Force, obedience, conformity, regimentation is the methodology of tribal morality. Obedience to authority and faith in a mythology is demanded. These are the values taught by the tribe's religion.
- (4) Psychology: Self-deception, compartmentalization, neuroses. The tri-partite psyche is the result.

- (5) Metaphysics: God's nature and wishes are unknowable to common tribal members. Only to special 'Prophets' does God 'reveal' his secrets. 'Revealed' religions believe God to be a supernatural being who inhabits a supernatural realm. Knowledge of God is only obtainable from these 'experts'. Obedience to authority is to be rewarded by joining God in his Heaven after death.

The psychological symptoms of this slave or tribal morality include an excessive concern with gaining the approval, and avoiding the disapproval, of others. Fear of authority and hyper-suggestibility are also signs. The need to place the wishes of others first and to subjugate ones own desires continues the slave orientation. This is often carried to such extremes as to be masochistic. This often leads to neuroses and even psychoses. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Do not be confused by the superficial differences and variations among religious beliefs or tribal structures. The morality of self-sacrifice had to be adopted by all tribes if they did wished to avoid extinction as no other technique produced slaves as well or as reliably. So there are lots of superficial differences between religions and between tribal governments. But underneath, at their base, they are the same. What you see as differences for example, in the governmental structure of various tribes and nations are just different attempts at making the morality of sacrifice work. Pagan religions, monotheistic religions, every kind and type of mythology you can imagine, have and are being used to promote the virtue of human sacrifice. And over the past 20,000 years almost every conceivable societal structure has been tried in the attempt to make the morality of self-sacrifice work for a tribe or nation! Monarchy, oligarchy, communism, socialism, and welfare statism, each with dozens of variations, have all been tried in an effort to make the tribal morality of sacrifice work. The human race has been playing on this same one-string fiddle of human sacrifice for over 20,000 years!

From My Father – A Lesson Learned

by Pauline Rocco

When I was growing up, I often watched a weekly television program about WWII called, *Combat!*. One evening, after watching an episode, I asked my dad, (who was at that time on active duty in the U.S. military) if he had killed any Germans during the war. My dad said no that he wasn't involved in the war in Europe. Then he went on to say something that I have never forgotten and his words are still as clear in my mind as when he spoke them to me. Dad told me that he really would not have wanted to kill any Germans in the war because they were men fighting for their country, just like he was fighting for his. My dad continued on to explain that the politicians were the ones who got the wars going but the soldiers had to do the actual fighting. Finally, Dad told me that he wouldn't want to kill someone and then, for the rest of his life, have to think that maybe that soldier had a little girl, just like me, who would not have her dad coming

home to her. That idea startled me. I began to understand what a war "casualty" really meant.

On today's Sunday news programs, I have heard that there have now been 2,035 US service personnel killed in Iraq, more than 47,000 wounded, and more than 100,000 Iraqis killed.

Regular readers of *THINKonline!* know that this war was the opening move of the American Enterprise Institute's Project for a New American Century. Yes, this war was to be just the start of so many wars, a mad plot to impose democracy upon the Middle East. However, it just may be that there is a light at the end of this dark age tunnel. I am referring to the ongoing investigation by Patrick Fitzgerald.

www.iwtnews.com/libby_hersh

I like to think about the many things I learned from my father. I think of him with love and gratitude and I acknowledge that I have no higher father than my natural one. If only the president had given his own father the respect that he is due! But, instead, we are in a calamitous situation because George W. decided to follow the imagined directives of some mythical "higher father." We can all see the urgency of returning reason, logic, and non-theocratic thinking to our political decisions.

This Friday, November 11, is Veterans' Day. There is really only one way that you can support our troops. Make a call to all of your representatives in Washington DC and demand that our troops come home from Iraq today, if not sooner! Every troop is someone's dad, son, brother, (mother, daughter, sister). Don't fall prey to the false comparison of war dead to auto accidents or the murder rate in Detroit! The horrible death toll in Iraq was brought to the U.S. by the neocons. Do your patriotic duty to **SAVE OUR TROOPS—BRING THEM HOME.**

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Deistic, Not Theistic, Intelligent Design

by Robert L. Johnson

Deistic Intelligent Design (DID) is the belief of an intelligent eternal creating Force/Creator presupposed when contemplating the order found throughout Nature. The study of the order found throughout Nature is science.

When I ran the article on ID in the November issue of *THINKonline!* I received some email that sounded like the person was going to unsubscribe from *THINKonline!* if we endorsed ID. I just want to clear this up. As Deists, we believe in God/Designer/Creator/Force. We don't believe in any of the so-called "revelations" of any of the various "revealed" religions. But Deists DO believe in a Designer of Nature. Many historic Deists like Jefferson actually refer to God as the Designer. Based on observing the stars tonight I'd say he/she is a very intelligent Designer.

Some of the people currently promoting ID are, in all probability, just sneaky Christians. They use ID as a means to get Biblical creationism taught in public schools. As was recently [reported](#), the charlatan Pat Robertson made this clear when he basically damned the people of Dover who voted out the school board members who were promoting ID. An article about Robertson makes the statement that ID is a rival of Darwinian theory. That could not be said about Deism and Deistic Intelligent Design. I had an atheist tell me once that there is no Creator and the proof is in snow flakes. Each snow flake is different so, he illogically "reasoned", the Creator would have to spend all his time making snow flakes. I explained to him that Deists believe that the Designer designed the laws of nature that govern snow flakes. And likewise, evolution is one of the designs of Nature's God. (Based on the childish and unreasonable ways God is portrayed by Christianity, I can understand how some people could initially accept the snow flake argument.)

Deists should not let the backdoor Christians scare them from openly endorsing DID. Not only does it serve the purpose of presenting to people God in a very reason-friendly and rational way, it gives us a weapon against the insanity of Christianity and the Bible. We can point out the absurdities the Bible is overflowing with regarding the origins of life and the creation. We can make it crystal clear that to believe in the Bible is going strongly and directly against our God-given reason. We know our reason and the Bible have two very different authors. DID offers us a great opportunity!

The below article is the third in a four part series.

The Evolution and History of Morality

by Henry E. Jones, M.D.

IV. Problems with the tribal system

The tribal social system relies on force. Religious morality must be taught didactically and reinforced frequently. Laws and regulatory edicts must be proliferated to cover every possible contingency. Everyone is forced by everyone else to fulfill their social obligations and expectations. In many societies, for example the Inca and Aztec tribes, this might have included volunteering as a sacrificial offering to the gods. Obedience, conformity, and self-sacrifice are the psychological traits that tribal members must cultivate as they submit to enslavement to the social order under tribal rule. Both the slaves and the masters subscribe to the same mythology and share the same psychology. So long as few seriously question their station the system can function fairly smoothly.

But over the past few millennia improving technology has given more and more people easier lives and more time to question the social order. More and more people have come to resist the slave mentality and the domination that goes with it. By the beginning of our written history, around 5000 years ago, we begin witnessing an almost continuous cycle of rebellion and repressive crack-down. Following each great rebellion tribal leaders renew their efforts to inculcate the tribal morality. Our ancestors were so determined to make human sacrifice work as the proper morality for society that they began blaming its failure to work on human nature!

Rather than examine their belief that human sacrifice must be the proper morality, they concluded that their inability to make human sacrifice work was evidence of some deep-seated moral deficiency in the human race. They therefore set up elaborate institutions to work around-the-clock providing intense indoctrination in the tribal morality of slavery. These institutions saw their mission as trying to correct human nature! Rather than designing a society around the facts of human nature, around the facts of biology, our ancestors have spent millennia trying to force human beings to change their nature and comply with the idea that society must simply be a large family. This has led to the untold misery of millions enslaved by these ideas and the systems they produce. Slavery and incessant warfare have not dissuaded fanatic adherents of human sacrifice from their convictions. Instead institutions of behavioral modification, called religions were developed to press forth with the scheme. Religions are trying to change the nature of human beings! Religions are in the business of selling the tribal morality of human sacrifice, inculcating it in children, and in producing the slave psychology.

By teaching children that human sacrifice is the moral ideal we twist human beings against their nature. This ancient morality pressures everyone to follow the code of self-sacrifice! But human beings find it very difficult to behave in opposition to their self-interest. These religious institutions employ about every method known to get people to change their behavior. Bribery with promises of great riches is one technique. Obedience that may lead to promised eternal life and happiness is another. Scare tactics with supernatural demons and monsters are effective. The fear of everlasting pain and suffering works to some extent. But still it's a losing proposition. Few are able to stick with sacrificing their lives, abilities and property to society with much consistency or enthusiasm over the long-haul. But the guilt that they suffer as a result is almost as good for the ruling elite as obedience! For it galvanizes the guilty into confession, testimonials and renewed commitment to the morality of sacrifice.

This tribal system of producing slaves and controlling people worked pretty well for over 15,000 years. Most pagan religions promoted human sacrifice and the members of tribal societies prostrated themselves before their gods, kings and rulers as demanded. Millions have died in almost continuous warfare over minor variations in their mythology, and their moral codes of sacrifice and slavery. But slowly, beginning around 5000 years ago, the idea of individual freedom began to creep very slowly into peoples thinking. A written language may have helped.

The Israelites began to question and finally abandon the sacrificial killing of people for the glory of god. An act for which most of the rest of the world has never forgiven them. Next, Jesus Christ totally condemned the sacrificial killing of people, stating that his crucifixion was the last human sacrifice required for all time! But elsewhere, among the Incas and Aztecs for example, the killing of humans as an offering to god continued.

The killing of human beings as a sacrificial offering to god remains popular today. All contemporary religions continue to exalt self-sacrifice.

The Greek invention of democracy provided a giant step in the direction of freedom. Then an explosion of free thinking and freedom seeking occurred in Western Europe. Luther and Gutenberg helped liberate millions while Columbus led the escape from the old world. The New World offered mankind an opportunity to escape from the Old World not just physically and geographically, but mentally and morally as well. In 1776 the people of the United States declared their complete independence from the old world tribal system! They were able to do this because they had returned, in great measure, to a deist morality! The United States offered a NEW morality for a new millennium!

I do not believe that our Founding Fathers were explicitly aware that they were embracing a „new“ morality. They appear to have been confused about this and some of their contradictory actions may be explained by this confusion. But the Declaration of Independence and establishment of the United States marked a completely new way of viewing the individual and the tribe or state. The Founding Fathers declared the new country to be established for benefit of the masses! The Founding Fathers turned tradition on its ear, completely reversing the roles of ruler and ruled! It was a 180 degree turn. And the rest of the world has never forgiven the United States for this! The United States Constitution states that the purpose of the country is to allow „life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness“ to individual citizens! Note that nowhere in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States is the individual subordinated to the nation or the government! Indeed it states quite explicitly that the state is formed by and for the citizen! This idea is completely foreign to the thinking of tribal peoples. The Founding Fathers were unquestionably anti-tribal, they did not believe in the morality of self-sacrifice or in the slavery it supported. The Constitution they authored is decidedly opposed to tribalism.

The United States was thus formed by a group of men who, whether they were aware of it or not, held a very different morality from that which had ruled the world at the time, and had for 20 millennia. Their moral standard was very different from the morality of human sacrifice which was, and still is, held in honor by tribal societies around the world. How did this deistic or „natural“ morality shape the United States and how has it so profoundly changed the world?

V. The Psychological Consequences of Religious Morality

The manufacture of mental illness

Once a child has incorporated the concept of human sacrifice as a virtue into his mind the only escape from suicide is for him to engage in some kind of self-deception. Most children in this circumstance perform a mental split. Incorporating sacrifice into his mind as a virtue will require a child to engage in such self-deception in order to survive. If the individual is unable to split his „self“, through a process called compartmentalization, he will stay in constant torment of guilt and imminent suicide. Mental integrity will lead to death.

Creating a compartment in his mind is necessary to the self-deception. Such a split is necessary because the person must separate his code of self-sacrifice from his day-to-day real world existence to survive. This is sometimes referred to as the masochistic split or contract. It is at this point that the child makes a „contract“ with God, Allah, Providence, fate or an equivalent. The terms of the psychological contract are that the child will perform self-sacrifice in exchange for success and happiness. Self-flagellation and masochistic behaviors become the bargaining chips with which self-esteem is purchased. Of course we know what this type of behavior will do to endorphin levels in the brain. It is through compartmentalization that an individual is able to accomplish this split which then allows him to pay lip service to his moral code of sacrifice and yet do for himself enough to remain alive.

Those who do not do this, must out of moral necessity, sacrifice everything they have of value, including, ultimately their life. The code of self-sacrifice is the most destructive to those youngsters who are the most idealistic. Those who fight the hardest for philosophical consistency and mental integrity may become the sickest. This clash may drive some to psychosis. Many more are driven to drugs and alcohol. The conscientious application of the code of self-sacrifice will require an individual to divest themselves of everything they possess. Only after complete impoverishment, only after surrendering all their abilities and assets and becoming totally needful can such a person feel morally virtuous. „Saints“ do this. Most people do not do this, they compartmentalize. They tell themselves that they are sinful. They tell themselves that they are bad. They tell themselves that truly good people are able to „give all“. They perform the masochistic split, contract with the Almighty and manage to survive. Such compartmentalization leads to the three-part psyche described by Sigmund Freud.

But compartmentalization is not free of side-effects. Creating artificial compartments in the mind is not a perfect solution. Trying to make the anti-life code of self-sacrifice work in the real world cannot be done in a completely effective way. As you might expect compartmentalization runs into a problem; the problem is the JANUS EFFECT.

A matrix of percepts, topped with basic concepts, crowned with higher order abstract concepts, has its roots in the ground, terra firma or objective reality. A healthy mind has four-dimensionally integrated concepts which mean that they are integrated back and

down with associations that tie them to external reality. The important point here is the matrix of concepts that must be placed within the compartments the self-sacrificing person creates within his mind is not tied to perceptual or any other reality. These concepts or beliefs are not tied to anything, except maybe hope, that is why they are called „floating abstractions“. This group of unintegrated and usually uninterrupted concepts is housed in this specially created compartment. This causes several kinds of side effects.

This newly created compartment produces another „self“. The individual then has this second „self“ he must deal with. He must hide his selfish „self“ while pledging allegiance to the code of self-sacrifice. This creates a huge amount of anxiety because of the constant vigilance and energy necessary to keep everything separated and the constant fear that he may not be able to do so.

But the most profound side effect of compartmentalization is it cannot be limited to a single compartment. Whenever one floating conceptual matrix is created and maintained through force within a mind it creates its opposite „self“, a mirror „self“. An action causes an opposite and equal reaction. This is true in outer space where there is no gravity. This is also true in the mind. Abstractions that are unconnected to reality, without links to percepts, floating loose and unattached by integration, create their opposites the more they are reinforced. This is the Janus Effect.

A body of beliefs, a matrix of concepts, integrated four-dimensionally and connected to external reality, does not cause a rebound or reaction, does not create a mirror „self“, is immune to the Janus Effect.

The individual trying to adhere to a religious morality thus develops a third „self“, three personalities to deal with! Freud labeled the first artificial compartment the Super-ego. By definition those concepts stored in the Superego are those which cannot be integrated into the reality-based portion of the mind, or Ego. The superego is those mythological beliefs in support of self-sacrifice. The superego will therefore, because of the Janus Effect, create its opposite compartment, holding concepts opposite those in the Superego. Freud named this compartment the Id. Paradoxically, the more Superego concepts are reinforced, the more Id concepts are automatically reinforced as well. So the more one prays for forgiveness of sins and sinning, the more powerful forbidden fantasies become. The harder one tries to refrain from drugs or alcohol the stronger the urge becomes.

Because of compartmentalization these individuals are in flux regarding their identity. (1).A person so compartmentalized might identify with the code of sacrifice within the Superego. He might then lead a life of self-sacrificing masochism. (2). On the other hand he might identify with his „bad, evil, unworthy, and destructive self“, the Id. He may

then be sadistic. When the „mentally ill“ individual sides with his Ego, which is when he rationally asserts his right to his own self-interest, he then feels guilty because he is violating his moral code. And of course he can turn from one accommodation to the other, as the stresses and opportunities of life change.

Commitment to a religion or ideology can help a person identify with his Super-ego, the „good“ sacrificing side of his „self“. Religions and utopian political ideologies allow one to think well of oneself through redemption. Faith in some promise of redemption, of being „reborn“ or „born again“ provides hope of happiness. This postpones total destruction of the „self“ and relegates self-destruction to times of intoxication and tragedy. Without faith in redemption the individual might engage in self-destructive behaviors. The redemptive process must be „extra self“, or beyond or above the self. Redemption must come from without, from a „higher power“. To be „saved“, one must be a „true believer“. Nothing good can come from within, the „self“ is bad, and it cannot redeem anything. Believers in tribalism try in earnest to make the code of sacrifice work in their minds and for society. Many religious, philosophical and political systems have been concocted that promise the unhappy, self-sacrificing person the redemption he desperately seeks. In exchange for self-sacrifice in this life, in this world, they offer the reward of happiness in a utopia in a hereafter. The „mentally ill“ latch onto these beliefs as a drowning man grabs a life raft. These belief systems are indeed true life rafts as self-destruction or suicide is the alternative. The mentally ill person cannot, will not, fight for his „self“, but he can fight and die for his „holy cause“. And if fighting for his holy cause requires him to murder others, and then he relishes his mission.

These „revealed“ religions also require the suspension of reason and logic and a reliance on faith. A faith based psycho-epistemology will cause cognitive problems. So in addition to anxiety, guilt and depression, psychosis is very likely. Thus both the morality of self-sacrifice and a psycho-epistemology based on faith rather than perception; work to destroy the proper functioning of the human mind. Belief in any of the revealed religions is incompatible with mental health on the individual level, and incompatible with freedom on the societal level.

Self-sacrifice causes a deficiency of brain endorphins that leads to chronic depression. Many drugs, legal and illegal, act as artificial endorphins, temporally relieving symptoms. Utopian ideologies and revealed religions can also act a lot like artificial endorphins. There may provide an immediate relief of some symptoms but the side effects of the chronic lack of „self“ nourishment will take its toll. Again a better solution is to delete the morality of self-sacrifice and install the morality of selfishness.

Tribal individuals, that is, those people who believe in the morality of self-sacrifice, feel alienated, naked and exposed when without their tribal institutions. Religious institutions are needed to indoctrinate and reinforce tribal beliefs. Religious schools are needed to

teach the children the tribal mythology. Tribal legal institutions are needed to make and enforce laws consistent with tribal belief. Authoritarian institutions are needed to apply the force necessary to maintain conformity to tribal expectations. When these institutional supports are absent or optional, the tribal person is alienated. He needs to be needed by others. He needs to practice his slavery. He needs someone in authority to tell him what to do. Therefore he needs his society to provide him with an institutional framework and support for his mission. Freedom of choice is the last thing he wants. He experiences freedom of choice as an overbearing burden.

The below is taken from Ray's book, My Life With God IN and OUT of the Church

Thought Provoking Quotes

"Truth never envelops itself in mystery, and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself."

"He who dares not offend cannot be honest."

"Of all the tyrannies that affect mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst."

"But if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes?"

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

"When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon."

Thomas Paine