

The Best of *THINKonline!*

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(The below excellent thought provoking article/email makes the case for Deistic Intelligent Design, not Creationism as preached by the various "revealed"/hearsay religions. The editor)

Court Rejects Intelligent Design in Science Class

The Opinion of Judge John E. Jones III

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

E-mail: I send My Opinion to Judge John E. Jones

Good evening, Judge. I recently saw the news on TV that you have barred a Pennsylvania public school district from teaching "Intelligent Design" (ID) in biology classes. I don't doubt that you sought the truth during the six-week deliberations held in your court. What you heard there convinced you that striking down the teaching of ID in science classes was the better thing to do.

The following days, I searched the Internet for a complete copy of your 139 page opinion all in vain. But in various articles, I gathered 11 quotes attributed to you. If these quotations are not exact, please set me straight. I am looking for the truth which in my book comes first.

One quote in the Associated Press article dated December 20 has you saying "While the arguments for intelligent design may be true, the court takes no position on this proposition." But isn't making this pronouncement tantamount to taking a position?

The same article has you saying, There is overwhelming evidence establishing that intelligent design is a religious view, a mere re-labeling of creationism." My dictionary defines 'creationism' as the doctrine that ascribes the origin of matter and species to an act of creation by God. Sorry, sir, but the theory of ID does not do that. It simply states that the designs in Nature indicate intelligence - nothing more.

I for one gladly accept that revelation of intelligence in its stark simplicity. When I first learned about ID, I let my mind speculate about that

intelligence: it was supreme, all powerful, and benevolent. But what humans observe in nature is simply intelligent designs. Could I be satisfied with that terse revelation of nature? Yes I could and I am.

Apparently, during the deliberations in your court, some advocate remarked that the teenagers in science classes could easily be led to believe that the Intelligence revealed in nature's designs is the same Being who is revealed more elaborately in the Bible.

So, instead of flatly saying that "ID is not science", you could have warned the science teachers not to identify the Intelligence of ID with what the Bible and its preachers call God. The theory of ID does not say that nor should the teachers of ID.

Such an injunction would have been within your authority and competence, not so your opinion that "ID is not science". A judge determines what is or is not lawful - not what is or is not scientific. I believe that in this instance you may have overstepped the bounds of your competence.

To ward off this indictment, you grasped the charge that ID was nothing but creationism in disguise. In 1987 the Supreme Court ruled that creationism may not be taught in public schools. Identifying ID with creationism got you off the hook. You could benefit from their decision and authority to exclude the teaching of ID in the science class rooms of public schools.

But when you forbade the teaching of ID in high school science classes, you prevented teenagers from hearing about intelligent designs in nature that presuppose intelligence. That was an injustice to those young people who are being brainwashed by instructors of revealed religions at home and churches or synagogues or mosques.

I recall my teenage environment totally immersed in Catholicism. About God and religion I knew nothing other than what my parents, nuns and priests taught me. So in making choices for my career and preparing for it, the profession of priesthood appeared like the most noble. That's what I chose and became its captive for many years.

Today's teenagers are also preparing for their future. Millions of them are born and bred in religious families and in places of worship where they hear only about God as revealed in the Bible or the Koran. There God is revealed as the creator of the universe which includes the earth in which we live.

For centuries, religions caused conflict, persecution, and wars. To avoid that in our country, the constitution forbids the promotion of any religion in its laws and institutions.

In March 1925, the State of Tennessee forbade the teaching of evolution in public schools. Months later one teacher, John Scopes, ignored that prohibition and taught evolution in his class. The court found him guilty and fined him.

Later in the year, after a famous debate, the state allowed the teaching of evolution in public schools.

In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states cannot require public schools to balance evolution lessons by teaching creationism.

I have a feeling that history will repeat itself with a twist. This year, your court ruled that public school boards in your district cannot require the science teacher to balance evolution lessons by teaching or simply mentioning the theory of Intelligent Design.

While regretting your ruling against the teaching of ID in science classes, I am confident that the truth of ID will win out and its teaching in science classes will resume somewhere in the country. But next time, when it's challenged in court, perhaps in the Supreme Court, ID will be allowed in the science class - not to replace the valid theory of evolution but to complement it with another facet of the universe. That will be a great day for teenagers in science classrooms. Those youngsters need and deserve to know the whole truth about nature.

*You can visit the site of Ray Fontaine at <http://www.deism.com/to-natures-god.net/> And you can order Ray's outstanding book on his journey from being a Roman Catholic priest for over 20 years to being an active Deist, [My Life With God IN and OUT of The Church](#) in eBook/PDF. *The editor**

THE EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF MORALITY

Why religious fundamentalists hate the United States And Wish to kill Americans

by Henry E. Jones, M.D.

VI. THE MORALITY OR RATIONAL SELF-INTEREST

The Founders of the United States accomplished a tremendous military, political and organizational feat. But what they over-came and accomplished psychologically was even greater! Benjamin Franklin may have expressed it best. On the floor of the Continental Congress, in a moment of epiphany, he said, "We do not need a king, we can rule ourselves!"

The Constitution of the United States was clearly written to protect its citizens from the establishment of an old world tribal government. The concept of separation of church and state is about as clear as they could conceptualize it. This was of much concern to the Founding Fathers as they created the constitutional foundation for the new nation. The Founding Fathers did not explicitly elucidate a new morality. Many of the Founding Fathers were not Christians. Thomas Jefferson was a deist as were many others. Their views were closer to those of Native Americans such as the Iroquois. Perhaps they were influenced by the primitive conditions in which they lived. Deists are not at war with their perception. Indeed they regard it as their direct link to their God. If our Founding Fathers had clearly spelled out their morality I am sure it would have been a deist morality of rational self-interest and not the morality of human sacrifice.

What the Founding Fathers did imply was that every human being owns his life outright, in total, free of all leans, as a gift from God. This is in direct opposition to tribal philosophy. This ownership of oneself is absolute. A human being has no mortgage to pay on his existence. So the Constitution is without question anti-slavery. The Constitution of the United States implies that every human being should be free to pursue his own self-interest without any requirement to fulfill the expectations of others. The morality of life is implied by other statements and principles in the Constitution. The morality of life condemns the initiation of force and implies an exclusive dependence upon persuasion and trade in human relations. The motto of the morality of life is „voluntary exchange to mutual satisfaction“. These statements would not appear out of place in the Constitution. Thus the morality of life is implied by the Constitution. This morality of life recognizes,

and advocates, as the proper motivation in all of life's choices, be derived from absolute and total selfishness. Any element of sacrifice was recognized as barbaric, anti-life and evil.

The Founding Fathers went a long way toward outlawing slavery. They should have outlawed Black slavery explicitly. This is one of the mistakes they made. This mistake in our Constitution was corrected by subsequent generations. Other mistakes in our Constitution have not been addressed. Instead each succeeding generation and its lawmakers have sought to take us back into a tribal social structure. We can label this morality, the code of the United States. or perhaps better as the „capitalist morality“. I prefer to call it the Morality of Rational Self-Interest. Let me list the elements of this "Morality".

- (1) Purpose: This morality is directed toward what is best for the individual. Happiness for the individual is its purpose.
- (2) Highest good: The highest good according to this morality is Productivity. Production of life sustaining and life maintaining goods and services is the highest calling.
- (3) Methodology: Reason, persuasion and trade are the ways one obtains what they want. Example and instruction are the methods employed to impart this morality.
- (4) Psychology: Aggression, the initiation of force, as a means of obtaining satisfaction of ones needs is condemned. Trade and barter are the techniques required of this morality. The initiation of force, intimidation and aggression are viewed as signs of immaturity and weakness. A strict sense of ownership and property rights is required of this morality. Collectively owned, or property held by a group as undivided interest, is discouraged as encouraging conflict and dissension.
- (5) Sexual behavior is viewed as a specialized kind of trade. Force and intimidation in sexual relations have no place in this morality.

VII. The Impact of this NEW Morality:

Deism promotes a biologically and psychologically appropriate morality of selfishness. This „natural“ religion of deism had an immediate and profound impact upon the United States. This morality of rational self-interest quickly

propelled the United States to the world's leading nation in economic output and standard of living. In less than 300 years the United States became the lone super power in the world. Never before in the history of the human race has a nation advanced so rapidly. More reasons for tribal societies around the world to hate the United States and Americans.

But in the mist of unprecedented prosperity and achievement tribalist in the United States felt increasingly alienated. They felt out of place absent the governmental force needed to make everyone conform to their tribal ideals. They have therefore worked incessantly to bring old world tribalism to the United States.

VIII. The Natural God:

God is a natural God. There is no supernatural realm, no supernatural god. The real God is nature. Reality, the universe, the cosmos, the world, the galaxy, everything that is, these are all words and concepts that stand for the same thing; God.

God is everywhere to be seen, smelled, heard, tasted and felt. Our senses sense nothing but God. God speaks to us continuously through our senses and through our reason. We seek to learn God's laws. We learn God's laws through science, mathematics, art, music, history, and through every field of learning. All truth is knowledge of God. Those that seek truth seek to know God.

Religions that name their god after a man are false, for God requires no middleman; all can see and speak directly to God. And God speaks to all who listen.

Religions that teach human sacrifice or self-sacrifice are false. Exploiters and enslavers, not God, profit from man's sacrifice. God the natural God is pro-human life. He wants man to live, learn, prosper, and enjoy happiness.

God the natural God grants every individual absolute ownership of their life and energy. God grants to no one the right to initiate force or to take another's life, energy or property.

Nature Reveals Its Creator Part II

by Ray Fontaine, Ph.D.

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 Artic 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.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any Church that I know of. My own mind is my own Church." "All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."

Thomas Paine

". . . anything that distracts you from fidelity to the Ruler within you - means a loss of opportunity for some other task."

". . . he knows that it is not the world's opinions he should follow, but only those of men whose lives confessedly accord with Nature."

"What is the very best that can be said or done with the materials at your disposal? Be it what it may, you have the power to say it or do it; let there be no pretense that you are not a free agent."

Marcus Aurelius, Roman Stoic and Emperor taken from Meditations

THINKonline! February 2006

Deadly Cartoon

Revealed religions, all of them, are on very unstable ground. They are all built on superstition and myth. Knowing this fact, the leaders of these pretend organizations took strong measures to keep honest criticism to a minimum. They usually have two sets of punishments for those who dare to question the Great Oz. One set is supernatural, the other corporal.

The supernatural punishments can include anything from burning in Hell for eternity to floating around in Limbo for millennia. (I believe the Catholic Church has since canceled Limbo, so I'm not sure what happened to the souls floating around at the time of cancellation!) The offense that brings about such supernatural wrath can be not believing in Christianity's "holy spirit", which is an unforgivable sin, or one from a long list of "mortal" sins dreamt up by the Catholic Church.

The sins that require corporal punishment (sometimes they require both supernatural and corporal punishments) can be as harmless as a child arguing with their parent, which I know from experience required the saying of three Hail Mary's, to making an image of Mohammed, which according to signs shown on the news recently requires the guilty to have their head cut off.

Islam, just like Judaism which it sprang from, and Christianity with which it shares many common superstitions, requires strict control of its victims/followers as all revealed religions do. One taboo of Islam is not making a likeness of Mohammed, the MAN who founded Islam. When newspapers in Europe ran a cartoon not only showing a likeness of the MAN who founded Islam, but showed him wearing a turban shaped like a bomb (see picture below), Islamic religious leaders around the world started to whip-up the emotions of their victims/followers, demanding vengeance against the transgressors who dared to violate their religious superstition regarding their founder, Mohammed. Mainstream media in the US distorted the offending image for fear of offending the religious fundamentalists/fanatics. Even the US Government spoke against the cartoon, as if revealed religions are above criticism! I always thought the US Government was supposed to support free speech, not "revealed" religions.

Already about half a dozen people have been killed in the Islamic riots that are currently raging across the world in response to the offending cartoon. It seems the revealed religions just can't help taking human lives. From the wholesale butchering done by the Old Testament Jews against their neighbors, to the hundreds of thousands murdered by Christians during the Crusades and Inquisition, to senseless killings in the Middle East, Ireland, and India, the one evil characteristic shared by all of the revealed religions is violent death for those who dare question any of their superstitions!

As Deists, we have a responsibility to point out the absurdity of the superstition and the fear promoted by all of the revealed religions. We owe it to mankind, we owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to our Creator. As my Dad used to tell me, "God didn't give you a head to use as a hat rack!" But it seems this is exactly what the revealed religions demand of their followers - reject your God-given reason for our ignorant superstitions. We do an injustice to ourselves and to the world when we either follow the demand of the revealed religions to reject our God-given reason, or when we remain silent in the presence of such

deadly ignorance. And it's a slap in the face to our Creator and Friend who gave us the two most precious gifts, life and reason.

As I Think, So I Act

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

In retrospect, I divide my 88-year life into three phases: the first as a priest, the second as in transit, and the third as a deist. These stages differed greatly. Yet during all three, my thinking directed my actions. Throughout my life, I retained this vital basic principle.

Phase 1: As a Priest

Born and bred in a Catholic home and taught by priests in a seminary during 12 years, I believed everything that the Catholic Church teaches. I believed in God as revealed in the Bible interpreted by priests. I believed that God guaranteed the truth of the Bible. I believed that God granted infallibility to the Pope as he instructed his priests. One of them told me that God called me to become a priest.

Thinking that all this was true, I acted accordingly. I was ordained a priest in 1945. Then I preached the Gospel mostly in Ohio and New York during 17 years. When the Pope requested missionaries for Africa, I volunteered and went to Uganda. There I built a church and a school and preached the Gospel as interpreted by the Church. This was difficult work but as always, I acted as I thought best.

Phase 2: In Transit

It was in Africa that I began to question the teachings of the Church. The Church condemned all forms of contraceptives. The Church forbade the divorce of Catholics dutifully married in Church. It never allowed priests to marry, imposing absolute celibacy. These prohibitions caused untold suffering. Thinking that the Church might be wrong, I was compelled to act and check for myself the biblical basis for the Church's dogmas and regulations.

In the Old Testament, God entrusted the rituals to married men. Jesus chose married men for his disciples. In the early Church, popes, bishops and priests were married. The Gospels never mentioned birth control devices.

And so it was with almost all the doctrines of the Catholic Church - the Bible does not mention them. They were human fabrications. I lost faith in the teaching authority of the Church.

My fundamental principle of life "Act as you Think" directed me to abandon the Church and all its doctrines - but not my belief in God. The designs in nature and its structures and laws, all totally independent of the Church, require and presuppose an intelligent Creator at the origin of the universe. But nothing in nature indicates that God intervenes in the course of nature. The Creator's policy evidently lets creatures exploit their full potential while depending on their environment which includes their fellow humans.

Phase 3: As a Deist

After leaving the church, I was busy earning a living while helping my neighbor in many ways. During seven years, I provided assistance to a million refugees in Vietnam. Later I returned to Africa and directed a U.S. government project to drill deep wells for people living on the fringe of the Sahara Desert.

All the while, I never thought of sharing my deist belief with others. I kept it private. Back in America, I soon witnessed the suffering of friends disenchanted with the Church - not knowing what to do. I decided to help them by sharing my deist philosophy of life. My thinking directed that course of action.

I wrote my biography entitled: [*My Life with God in and out of the Church*](#). In the meantime, my wife suffered a stroke leaving her paralyzed in need of constant care. I had no time to publicize my book.

What to do? I would publish it on the Internet. My Website got some attention - about 200 visitors per month. But that was not enough. Unfortunately I could not do more. I searched the Internet for others who thought and acted like me.

I soon found the Website of "The World Union of Deists" headed by Robert Johnson - a confirmed Deist with a consuming desire to replace with Deism all religions based on reputedly divine revelations to ancient prophets. Like me, Robert Johnson believes that the only true and authentic revelation of God are the wonders of Nature. The designs, structures, and laws of Nature presuppose an intelligent Creator.

Robert Johnson created a wonderful Website at www.deism.com. It is loaded with articles ready to enlighten everyone searching for the truth about God. To do this, however, it must first be found. That is not easy among thousands of other Websites.

So it was with the North Star. The ancient mariners, especially those lost at sea, looked for guidance in the heavens. Eventually, sailors realized that one star remained stationary directly above the North Pole. Seeing it, a sailor could know in what direction to steer his ship. But first someone or something must point out the North Star among myriads of stars.

One constellation is easily distinguishable - that of the Big Dipper. A straight line between the two stars on the far end of the bowl of the dipper points to the North Star. Thus for generations the Big Dipper helped sailors find the North Star.

So it is for many people adrift in the world looking for the truth about God. Robert Johnson's Website points to God steadfastly. But it must first be visited. People must know about it. Someone must let the world know about the Website of the World Union of Deists.

How to do this? Robert Johnson believes that one way is to post enticing notices in places accessible to people looking for the truth about God. That could be difficult and expensive. But if there's a chance of success, it is worth a try.

Some may think that Robert Johnson is another Don Quixote who took on a task that was noble but unrealistic. In history, however, there have been a few Don Quixotes who overcame monstrous obstacles and changed the world. Someday one or more Don Quixotes will surely come and set in motion the eventual demise of all revealed Religions and the triumph of Deism worldwide. That day will come sooner if all Deists act as they think best.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"In the long run, men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, they had better aim at something high."

Henry Thoreau

"Then what is freedom? It is the will to be responsible to ourselves."

Friedrich Nietzsche

"The safest course is to do nothing against one's conscience. With this secret, we can enjoy life and have no fear from death."

Voltaire

***THINKonline!* March 2006**

The Inquisition - When Christianity Runs Rampant!

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.

(It's interesting to note that the last person murdered by the Church's Inquisition was the Deist [Cayetano Ripoll](#) who was murdered for teaching other people, especially children, about Deism. The editor)

Thought Provoking Quotes

"No man is prejudiced in favor of a thing, knowing it to be wrong. He is attached to it on the belief of its being right; and when he sees it is not so, the prejudice will be gone."

Thomas Paine

"To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any other exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object."

Henry David Thoreau

"When things are investigated, knowledge is extended. When knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere. When the will is sincere, the mind is correct. When the mind is correct, the self is cultivated. "

Confucius

"A great war leaves the country with three armies - an army of cripples, an army of mourners, and an army of thieves."

German proverb

"Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity

than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change. Each time a person stands up for an idea, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, (s)he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Robert F. Kennedy

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Real Healing - Not Faith Healing!

by Robert L. Johnson

A recent breakthrough by doctors and researchers now makes it a reality to grow human organs in the laboratory! Dr. Anthony Atala lead the efforts to grow a human bladder in a laboratory! Dr. Atala said he thinks the work will allow other human organs to be grown for transplant use!

No stem cells needed! The method developed to grow healthy bladders in the lab required only bladder cells to be taken from the patients. Stem cells were not required. Christians who say they're opposed to stem cell research because a human embryo is killed to harvest the stem cells should be ecstatic over this scientific progress! However, I haven't heard any positive comments made by any Christian leaders.

The Bible is full of it - references to "faith-healings" and other such nonsense. Because the Babble, or Bible, has no connection to God, its fantastic claims fall far short of reality. However, if we do study the creation of Nature's God, and see how the creation is put together, as Dr. Atala has done, we can prevent much sickness and misery. But by following the Bible we only show our disrespect for Nature's God and the results are dismal.

I'm astounded to see that in this day and age the Bible has such a strong death grip on billions of people. Don't believers see through the lies of the preachers, priests, mullahs, and rabbis??? When Billy Graham or Jerry Falwell gets sick they don't have believers anoint them with oil and lay hands on them, they get their ass into a hospital! As Deists it is our duty to make the average sincere believer in the "revealed" religions see reality. We need to make it very clear to them that by following the Bible they are NOT following God. Once the sincere people realize this truth, they will eventually let go of the superstitions and embrace Nature's God through Deism. Think of how much better the world will be when that happens!

How To Undermine The "Revealed" Religions

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

In my lifetime, I have been acquainted with three systems of thought about God: the Christian, the Jewish, and the Deist. The first two are based entirely on reputed revelations by God regarding supernatural entities. Deism, however, is based only on what nature's designs reveal - Intelligence.

Nature's designs can be observed by humans using their senses and intelligence, whereas none of the supernatural that is featured in Christianity and Judaism can be observed and proven. The supernatural is accepted only on faith - on the word of other humans.

Deism has only one tenet: nature's designs presuppose Intelligence. Nature reveals nothing more about that Intelligence. Deism has no Holy Writ, no rituals, no clergymen, no buildings of worship. Deism has no saints, no miracles, no afterlife, and no heaven. Christianity and Judaism, however, have them all.

Today, the number of American adults, who identify their religious beliefs, include 159,506,000 Christians and 2,831,000 Jews. The estimate of American Deists lies in the low thousands. This means that about 162 millions base their thoughts about God on divine revelations while only a few thousands base theirs on the designs in nature.

Deists are convinced that the Jews and the Christians are mistaken and that supernatural entities, events and places do not exist. Those people should be told the truth. But what is the most effective way to do that?

There are two approaches: one is focused on the doctrine taught; the other, on the teacher. In my opinion, the second approach is more effective.

Supernatural matters cannot be proven true, nor can they be proven false. They are beyond human ken. They can only be accepted on the word of a trustworthy teacher. The reliability of the teacher is crucial; faith depends on trust.

In my case, I was bred first in a fervent Catholic home and then in Catholic schools, churches and seminaries. I trusted all my teachers. They were all good people. They strongly believed what they taught. They would never knowingly deceive me. I never had reason to distrust any of them.

Later, as a priest I saw the suffering caused by the Church's ban against birth control. I checked the Bible carefully and found nothing there about birth control. Later I felt the privation imposed by the Church's law of clerical celibacy.

I read about the medieval Popes and bishops who fathered children to position them later in places of power. I read about the Inquisition that tortured people and burned them at the stake. I read about Popes who exchanged indulgences for money. I read about the Church that condemned Galileo for teaching that the earth rotates around the sun. I lost confidence

in the teaching authority of the Church and abandoned it and all its supernatural teachings.

I experienced the process of leaving a Church that preached a religion full of the supernatural. I first lost confidence in the Church. The Popes and bishops had disgraced themselves and discredited their teaching authority. I no longer believed in them and their teaching.

As regards Judaism, I know nothing about the teachers of that religion. I have not read or heard anything that would discredit their teaching authority. The press has been exposing the scandal of the Catholic priests and their bishops but not saying one discrediting word about Jewish rabbis.

As I said above, there are two approaches to enlightening the believers in supernatural religions: the first is to discredit the teachers of those religions: the second is to debunk their teaching. I prefer the first because the teachers have already disgraced themselves. Their followers are disposed to abandon them. The second approach is more difficult because the believers must first be shown that what they have lived by for years was a huge lie. Until that happens they will not listen or read with an open mind anything you say.

Regardless of this resistance, the arguments against the teaching of revealed-based religions must be made available on the Internet. There that information is like a beacon beaming light to people lost at sea. Surfers on the Internet can read them at leisure without pressure and embarrassment. This is happening every day judging by the e-mails arriving on my computer with increasing frequency.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"It is incumbent on 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."

". . . and having endeavored to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it *human reason*, as if man could give reason to himself."

Thomas Paine

"Matter in the universe is supple and compliant, and the Reason which controls it has no motive for ill-doing; for it is without malice, and does nothing with intent to injure, neither is anything harmed by it. By its ordinances all things have their birth and their fulfillment."

"Either the world is a mere hotch-potch of random cohesions and dispersions, or else it is a unity of order and providence. If the later, then I do reverence, I stand firmly, and I put my trust in the directing Power."

Marcus Aurelius

"We ought to esteem it of the greatest importance that the stories which children first hear should be adapted in the most perfect manner to the promotion of virtue."

Socrates

"The cosmos is the most beautiful thing of everything that exists."

Plato

THINKonline! May 2006

A Pessimist Versus An Optimist (An e-mail exchange)

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

Mr. Fontaine, I just finished combing through your website entitled: The Triumph of Nature's God in my Life. Evidently it has happened in your life; but not so in the lives of billions worldwide.

According to Time Almanac 2006, there are 2.1 billion Christians and 1.8 billion Muslims who believe in God as revealed to ancient prophets. By contrast, Deists, who believe like you, number in mere thousands.

In the eighteenth century, a group of thinkers made a valiant attempt to promote Deism. Voltaire and Thomas Paine were among them. But Deism never caught fire and never spread in Europe and America, surely not worldwide.

In the recent years, a few people have been promoting the theory of Intelligent Design. This theory maintains that the designs and structures in nature presuppose Intelligence. But these thinkers say nothing more about this Intelligence. It seems to me that the triumph of Nature's God worldwide is absolutely hopeless. What do you think?

E-mail no.34 My Optimistic View.

Thank you for your frank assessment of the future for the worldwide triumph of Nature's God. Thoughts like yours cross my mind now and then but not enough for me to give up and stop my pursuit of the final triumph of Nature's God. It is not hopeless.

Let me recall a series of events in history. In A.D.126 the Roman emperor Hadrian completed a temple in Rome and dedicated it to all the Roman gods. He named the temple "Pantheon" which means "the place for all the gods".

He knew that polytheism had existed for thousands of years and he assumed it would last forever.

Later, after the end of the Roman empire and of polytheism, the Pantheon served as a Christian church from 609 until 1885. There God, as portrayed in reputed supernatural revelations, was worshipped during 1276 years. All that time, the Catholic Popes and their clergy and faithful believed that the worship of God in that temple would go on forever.

After 1885, however, the Pantheon became the burial place for Italian heroes, such as King Victor Emmanuel 1 and the Renaissance painter, Raphael.

The story of the Pantheon demonstrates the endurance of religious beliefs. They linger for ages before change occurs. It took thousands of years for polytheism to dissipate and disappear.

In similar fashion, the monotheism of Abraham is in the process of dissipating into a numberless variety of beliefs. How long it will take to disappear altogether no one knows.

I believe it will not take thousands of years as it did for polytheism. In our modern world, science is revealing more and more structures and designs in nature. The Internet is reaching every corner of our planet and every home. I believe that Abraham's God may be replaced by Nature's God in just a few generations.

Meanwhile all I intend to do is to keep Deism alive the best I can. For now, my contribution may be just a flicker, which can produce a flame which can start a grass fire which can turn into a raging fire. When this happens, the triumph of Nature's God in my life will have contributed ever so little to the triumph of Nature's God worldwide. To you and many more I may seem like a cockeyed optimist but I like my chances of being right. Best wishes, Ray.

Critical Deism

by Robert L. Johnson

Many people feel that Deism should not be critical of the "revealed" religions. They think Deists should show respect not only to the people who belong to these unreasonable religions, but also to the religions themselves.

I agree that the sincere adherents to the "revealed" religions should be shown respect because their sincerity demands and deserves it. However, I lose respect for people who refuse to admit they are wrong when the error is clearly demonstrated. At that point they lose their sincerity. Most Deists had to admit they were wrong before accepting Deism. I know I had to. I frequently hear from former members of almost all of the "revealed" religions and from atheists and agnostics who've stated their previously held beliefs were wrong and that they didn't realize it until they discovered Deism. There is nothing wrong with being wrong as long as you admit you're wrong when it is shown to you. When I realized I was wrong to believe in the Bible and Christianity, I actually felt much better after the shock wore off! It's an awesome and great feeling to realize that the Bible is not true and has nothing to do with Nature's God!

Regarding showing respect to the teachings of the various "revealed" religions themselves, I think this is morally wrong. Why should such absurd and unreasonable teachings as original sin, a jealous god, etc. be shown any form of respect? If we love and respect our Creator, we can't show respect to ideas that degrade Him/Her.

It's time the dominant "revealed" religions are shown for what they are - ancient Middle Eastern superstitions that our God-given reason has proven to be false. If we truly believe God is real, how can we get closer to God by following something that is not based on reality? The more we get this Deistic message out, the sooner people will free themselves and their society from the shackles of fear and ignorance placed upon them by the "revealed" religions. Shackles that make violence and war an inescapable reality as is proven every day in the Middle East among other places.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his own opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies another this right makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it."

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

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

"Any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

"He who dares not offend cannot be honest."

Thomas Paine

"Change your thoughts and you change your world."

Marcus Aurelius

"Be not intimidated...nor suffer yourselves to be wheedled out of your liberties by any pretense of politeness, delicacy, or decency. These, as they are often used, are but three different names for hypocrisy, chicanery and cowardice."

"Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

John Adams

"Make yourselves sheep and the wolves will eat you."

"Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late."

"Moderation in all things -- including moderation."

"It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority."

Benjamin Franklin

THINKonline! June 2006

Thomas Paine - Still A Great Example For Deists 197 Years After His Death

by Robert L. Johnson

This Thursday, June 8th, is the 197th anniversary of the death of Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine has done more than any other person in history to see to it that Deism was introduced to the average person. Prior to Tom Paine, Deism was limited to intellectuals. Paine burst through that small circle and brought Deism to the masses with his outstanding book *The Age of Reason*. Speaking for myself, I was first introduced to Deism through *The Age of Reason*. I can't thank Mr. Paine enough for that!

Tom Paine wrote the first part of *The Age of Reason* while in France, after the French Revolution had gone bad. He knew he had made powerful enemies by fighting to save the lives of the King and Queen of France. Knowing that everyday brought about the beheadings of enemies of the Revolution, he realized that he would soon be arrested and probably have his head cut off. He had always wanted to write his ideas about God and religion but had wanted to wait until his final years so his writing would be most honest. With the negative political developments that threatened his life in 1793 France, he decided to write it immediately. The result was the first part of *The Age of Reason*.

In his preface to the second part to *The Age of Reason* he writes that while locked up in the French prison, ". . . I was seized with a fever that in its progress had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of *The Age of Reason*. I had then but little expectation of surviving, and those about me less. I know, therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my own principles."

It should give us comfort as Deists that we don't need to believe in the superstitions of the Bible or of any "revealed" religion in order to have peace of mind when facing death. In fact, we should look at ourselves as very

gifted to be free of the shackles of the "revealed" religions and to have been able to so live! What a great gift!

As Christians are apt to do, they lied about Tom Paine, saying that he accepted Jesus on his death bed. Thankfully, Tom Paine had some real friends who were there at his death and soon dispelled the Christian lies. (The Christians also tried this very same approach regarding the death of George Washington, another Deist. Those lies lived for awhile, but soon died as well.) Thomas Clio Rickman, a very good friend of Tom Paine's, was there at his passing. He wrote this account of his death. "On the eighth of June, 1809, about nine in the morning, he placidly, and almost without a struggle, died, as he had lived, a Deist."

Tom Paine never tired of spreading the word about Deism. After James Monroe secured his release from prison and he and his family nursed Paine back to health, Paine wrote the second part of *The Age of Reason*. After returning to America, he was attacked for his Deist ideas and beliefs. He was even denied the right to vote because he was a Deist! What did he do in response? He wrote even more attacks against Christianity, the Bible, and "revealed" religion and more essays promoting Deism! He helped Elihu Palmer, the former Christian preacher, get the word out about Deism by writing and contributing to his Deist magazine and other efforts. He truly is a great example for all Deists!

Everyone who truly believes in Deism and can see the benefits it brings to individuals, and that it has the potential to bring to society in general, should follow Tom Paine's example of doing everything in their power to see to it that Deism reaches the audience it deserves! Once we hit critical mass in the numbers of people we reach, individuals and society will be rocketed to a level of progress never thought possible! It's all up to us!

Designs Embedded in Nature Presuppose Intelligence

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

On February 11, I received a brief e-mail asking me "to explain my philosophy concerning the theory of Intelligent Design". I could answer that question in one sentence. But my correspondent surely expects and deserves more. However, if I should go beyond what nature's designs reveal, I will let my readers know.

An example from real-life will facilitate my explanation. On September 12, 1940, four boys went looking for their lost dog. The lads lived in

Southwestern France where many limestone caves dot the hillside. One of them had been sealed off for centuries by the forces of nature. In the late 1930's, a storm uprooted a big pine tree leaving a small opening into the Lascaux cave. The boys squeezed through it and called their dog.

Combing through several chambers, the boys saw vivid paintings on the walls and ceiling. They first noticed the galloping horses and reindeer. The boys had discovered a fabulous treasure of Paleolithic cave-art dating back 17,000 years. To view these paintings, click: <http://www.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/>.

Since that eventful day in 1940, a million people have visited the Lascaux cave. No one ever asked, "Did someone paint those animals?" That fact was self-evident. Rain or wind and dust could not account for those graphic animals. Nor could any subhuman animal. The only plausible artist was a human being.

But the visitors of the cave paintings did ask. "Who painted them? What was his name? What did he look like?" The tour guide answered, " No one knows. He never signed his paintings. Nor did he leave a self-portrait."

From the paintings, however, we know that he existed and that he was smart. He painted on uneven and rugged walls of a cave. He made his paint by grinding ocher, an earthy red or yellow iron ore, and mixing it with animal fat. He fashioned brushes with bone or wood and horse hair. Our cave artist was intelligent. This much we know from his work.

And so it is with the trillions of different designs and structures in nature, such as that of DNA. Its complex structure has been observed by scientists. It exists without a doubt.

When the scientists are asked what or who is responsible for the design of DNA, they simply answer, "We don't know. We can only observe the designs but not their designer."

Fortunately, however, human knowledge is not limited to what is observed by our senses. The human mind can deduce further reliable information. Just as the visitors of the cave paintings concluded that their painter was intelligent, so too can humans deduce that the agent of nature's designs, such as DNA, is intelligent - supremely intelligent.

But just as the cave paintings reveal nothing more about their artist, so also nature's designs reveal nothing further about their designer. Whatever else is said about them is the product of human imagination.

In final analysis, the designs in nature reveal a supremely intelligent agent who exists. I can accept that truth and live by it. If the Intelligent Designer had wanted more recognition or any specific reaction from humans, he could have expressed his wishes in nature. He did not; nor need we.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"On a TV show, Pat Robertson said -- and I quote, this is his quote. He said, 'If I heard the Lord right, the coast of America will be lashed by storms this year.' He actually said, 'If I heard the Lord right.' What? You weren't paying attention?"

Jay Leno

"The foundation of our Empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition, but at an Epoch when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period."

George Washington

"You have rights antecedent to all earthly governments: rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; rights derived from the Great Legislator of the universe."

John Adams

"Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow them."

Louisa May Alcott

"In times of universal deceit, telling the truth will be a revolutionary act."

George Orwell

"The shepherd always tries to persuade the sheep that their interests and his own are the same."

Marie Beyle

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Deism: A Revolution in Religion, A Revolution in You, by Bob Johnson

Reason: The Only Oracle of Man, by Ethan Allen

Principles of Nature, by Elihu Palmer

An Answer to C.S. Lewis' Mere Christianity, by Bob Johnson

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