



The Ft Worth Humanists meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. The gathering site is the Unitarian/Universalist Building 901 Page Ave. Prior to the meeting, several of us dine at Luby's Cafeteria, 2800 8th Ave. at 5:30 P M. All are welcome to join us!

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The HoFW Program for April 9th will be "The Mysterious World of Banking"

This is the 3rd part of the Zeitgeist DVD presentation dealing with international banking and the U.S. Federal Reserve System. To pique your interest, here is a quote President Woodrow Wilson made after he signed into law the creation of this non-governmental institution, The Federal Reserve System:

"A great industrial nation is controlled by its system of credit. Our system of credit is concentrated. The growth of the nation, therefore, and all our activities are in the hands of a few men. We have come to be one of the worst ruled, one of the most completely controlled and dominated governments in the civilized world. No longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men."

Another prominent President, James Madison, had this to say about banking in general:

"History records that money changers have used every form of alarm, design, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance."

I think most of us will be astonished to learn some of the truth about our banking system. I say 'some of the truth' because this film may not be as accurate as it could be. Perhaps some of us can help determine just how authoritative it is.

Dick



Skeptic giggles on Indian national TV as mystic totally fails to curse him to death

Pandit Surinder Sharma, a famous Indian tantrick (magician) was on a televised panel discussion when he claimed he could kill any man with black magic in under three minutes. Fellow panelist, Sanal Edamaruku, the president of Rationalist International, challenged the tantrick to kill him right then and there. Hilarity ensued as Sharma chanted the death mantra, and, when that failed, waved a knife and sprinkled water on him, as Edamarku laughed the entire time.

After two hours of this, the show's anchor pronounced the attempt a failure. The tantrick said he must be under the protection of a very powerful god, to which Edmarku replied "I am an atheist". The tantrick claimed nobody could stand up to his extra-special death spell, but that could only be performed at night. The TV station promptly arranged another trial at night, with predictable results.

Battle Against Teaching Evolution in Texas Begins

(Excerpted from the Dallas Observer)

A few weeks before the March 4 Republican primary, a group of candidates gathered at the Shady Valley Golf Club in Arlington for a meet-and-greet luncheon with voters. For the most part, the candidates were seasoned pros who all seemed to know each other, but one stood out from the rest. His name was Barney Maddox, and he looked lost. He wore an ill-fitting gray suit, his Coke-bottle glasses kept slipping down his nose, and he looked as if he cut his own hair.

While the other candidates worked the room, Maddox wandered around, looking for a hand to shake. Eventually, he ended up at a table overlooking the golf course, where he sat alone, waiting for the event to begin.

Not much was known about Maddox, because he did not grant interviews to the press. He had, however, been identified as perhaps the most dangerous man on the ballot by the Texas Freedom Network, a watchdog group in Austin that keeps tabs on the religious right.

The reasons for this were clear. Maddox was a young-Earth creationist, a Bible-literalist who believed the Earth was just 6,000 years old. He had written part of the curriculum for the Institute of Creation Research, a Dallas-based school that offers courses in creation science, and he had lectured at the Creation Evidence Museum in Glen Rose, which claims to have fossil evidence that dinosaurs and man walked together. He had once called evolution "the most irrational belief ever held by man." Now he wanted a seat on Texas' State Board of Education.

When their turns came to speak, Hardy went first, pointing out that she had 36 years in education and that as a member of the state board she had led an effort to require that all high school students take four years of science before graduation. She considered this her proudest accomplishment on the board.

His opponent, Pat Hardy, sat across the room. Fair-skinned and tall, with short red hair, she carried herself with the cheerful demeanor of a former school teacher, which she had been for 30 years. Social studies had been her subject, and truth be told, she missed the classroom. For the last six years she had served on the State Board of Education and was running for re-election. Hardy believed God had created the Earth, but she wasn't sure this belonged in the classroom. It was no secret this had made her the target of the religious right.

Over the next several weeks, Maddox ran a quiet campaign, avoiding events where the press might show up and ignoring their phone calls. While Hardy was relying on the mainstream press and the education establishment to get elected, Maddox was courting a different stripe of voters. He had the backing of the state home-school association, social conservative groups such as the Plano-based Free Market Foundation and people like former State Board of Education member Richard Neill, who, before serving as Maddox's campaign treasurer, had once endorsed a candidate who wanted to dismantle the public education system and replace it with private Christian schools.

When she finished, Maddox stepped to the microphone. He said nothing of his experience in education, because he had none. Nor did he have any experience in politics. What he had to offer were true conservative credentials, he said, and if elected he would have something to say about the teaching of evolution, which he called "a pre-Civil War fairy tale." The candidates took a few questions from the audience, and when they were done, Maddox slipped out the door.

Two weeks ago, while the rest of the state was watching the results of the Democratic presidential primary, Hardy quietly defeated Maddox. Had Maddox won, a movement more than 10 years in the making—a religious right takeover of the State Board of Education—would have been complete.

<http://www.dallasobserver.com/2008-03-20/news/battle-against-teaching-evolution-in-texas-begins/>

The Swedish government has announced plans to clamp down hard on religious education.

It will soon become illegal even for private faith schools to teach religious doctrines as if they were true. In an interesting twist on the American experience, prayer will remain legal in schools - after all, it has no truth value. But everything that takes place on the curriculum's time will have to be secular. "Pupils must be protected from every sort of fundamentalism," said the minister for schools, Jan Björklund.

Creationism and ID are explicitly banned but so is proselytising even in religious education classes. The Qur'an may not be taught as if it is true even in Muslim independent schools, nor may the Bible in Christian schools. The decision looks like a really startling attack on the right of parents to have their children taught what they would like. Of course it does not go so far as the Dawkins policy of prohibiting parents from trying to pass on their doctrines even in their own families - and, if it did, it would certainly run foul of the European convention on human rights. It does not even go as far as Nyamko Sabuni, the minister for integration - herself born in Burundi - would like: she wanted to ban all religious schools altogether. But it is still a pretty drastic measure from an English perspective.

The law is being presented in Sweden as if it mostly concerned fundamentalist Christian sects in the backwoods; but the Christian Democratic party, which represents such people if anyone does, is perfectly happy with the new regulation. There is little doubt that combating Islamic fundamentalism is the underlying aim, especially in conjunction with another new requirement that all independent schools declare all their funding sources. This would allow the inspectors - whose budget is being doubled - to concentrate their efforts on those schools most likely to be paid to break the rules.

In the background to these announcements comes the release of a frightening documentary film on Swedish jihadis, which follows young men over a period of two years on their slow conversion to militant Islamism.

From The Guardian

P. Z. Myers of the University of Minnesota, Morris, and Richard Dawkins of Oxford tried to go to the movies at the Mall of America in Minneapolis Thursday evening. Dr. Dawkins got in. Dr. Myers did not.

On those facts, everybody agrees. After that, things break down. The movie the two scientists wanted to see was "Expelled," whose online trailer asserts that people in academia who see evidence of supernatural intelligence in biological processes — an idea called "intelligent design" — have unfairly lost their jobs, been denied tenure or suffered other penalties as part of a scientific conspiracy to keep God out of the nation's laboratories and classrooms.

Dr. Myers asserts that he was unfairly barred from the film, in which both he and Dr. Dawkins appear, and that Dr. Dawkins would have been, too, if people running the screening had realized who he was — a world leader in the field of evolutionary biology.

But Walt Ruloff, a partner in Premise Media, the film's producer, said the screening was one of a series the producers have organized for the film, which opens April 18, in hopes of building favorable word-of-mouth among people likely to be sympathetic to its message.

People like Dr. Myers and Dr. Dawkins would not have been invited, he said. Mark Mathis, a producer of the film who attended the screening, said that "of course" he had recognized Dr. Dawkins, but allowed him to attend because "he has handled himself fairly honorably, he is a guest in our country and I had to presume he had flown a long way to see the film."

Actually, Dr. Myers and Dr. Dawkins said in interviews that they had long planned to be in Minneapolis this week to attend a convention of atheists. Dr. Dawkins, an vocal critic of religion, is on the convention program.

(continued on Page 4)

And both had earlier complained that they originally agreed to appear in the movie — then called “Crossroads” — because producers told them it would be an examination of religion and science, not a defense of intelligent design, an ideological cousin of creationism.

People who have seen the movie say it also suggests that there is a link between the theory of evolution and ideas like Nazism, something Dr. Dawkins called “a major outrage.”

For more go to NY Times site:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/21/science/21expelledw.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Is Abortion Murder? By Graham Spurgeon

About the Author:

Bible Scholar Graham Spurgeon, a Baptist, lives in Buncombe County, North Carolina. This essay has been distributed in all 50 states and in many foreign countries, and is considered by many people to be the most persuasive pro-abortion essay ever published in America.

Q. What is your position on abortion?

A. I believe that a woman should be free to choose whether or not to have an abortion. No one else should tell her not to have an abortion. No one else should tell her what to do and what not to do.

Q. Who wants to deny her this choice?

A. There are many fanatics in our land who want to make all abortions illegal.

Q. Are all anti-abortionists fanatics?

A. No, and I respect those anti-abortionists who are willing to make concessions in a generous, humane spirit. For example, my esteemed brother In Christ, Billy Graham, approves of abortion “In cases of rape, incest, or when the mother’s life is at stake.” When I talk about fanatics, I’m not talking about folks like Billy Graham. I am talking about those cruel individuals who are against any and all abortions - period.

Q. Is abortion murder?

A. The fanatics say so, but they haven’t looked closely at the Bible. Let’s see what the Word of God says on this matter: In the Old Testament, a law was stated clearly for the Children of Israel after they came out of Egypt:

If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man responsible must pay the compensation demanded of him by the woman’s master; he shall hand it over, after arbitration. But should she die, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Exodus 21:22-24, Jerusalem Bible)

In other words, if you cause the death of the fetus, you merely pay a fine; if you cause the death of the woman, you lose your own life. Thus, the Bible clearly shows that a fetus is not considered a person. If the fetus were considered to be a person, then the penalty for killing it would be the same as for killing the woman – death.

Abortion then, is not murder. These verses in Exodus, by the way, are backed up by four thousand years of Jewish law; abortion has never been considered murder in Jewish law. A fetus is only a potential person.

Incidentally, the fine the Israelite man had to pay was not for the fetus; it was for hurting the woman. This is made clear in another translation of the same verses (Revised Standard Version): “The one who hurt her (the woman) shall be fined.” There was no fine for hurting the fetus because it was not considered a person

For more cut and paste the following:
<http://www.angelfire.com/ut/indigo/murder.html>

Fewer confessions and new sins

By David Willey
BBC News, Rome

The Vatican has brought up to date the traditional seven deadly sins by adding seven modern mortal sins it claims are becoming prevalent in what it calls an era of "unstoppable globalisation".

Those newly risking eternal punishment include drug pushers, the obscenely wealthy, and scientists who manipulate human genes. So "thou shalt not carry out morally dubious scientific experiments" or "thou shalt not pollute the earth" might one day be added to the Ten Commandments.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into Hell". The new mortal sins were listed by Archbishop Gianfranco Girotti at the end of a week-long training seminar in Rome for priests, aimed at encouraging a revival of the practice of confession - or the Sacrament of Penance in Church jargon.

According to a survey carried out here 10 years ago by the Catholic University, 60% of Italians have stopped going to confession altogether. The situation has certainly not improved during the past decade.

Catholics are supposed to confess their sins to a priest at least once a year. The priest absolves them in God's name.

Talking to course members at the end of the seminar organised by the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Vatican department in charge of fixing the punishments and indulgences handed down to sinners, Pope Benedict added his own personal voice of disquiet.

In an interview with the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, Archbishop Girotti said he thought the most dangerous areas for committing new types of sins lay in the fields of bioethics and ecology.

He also named abortion and paedophilia as two of the greatest sins of our times.

The archbishop brushed off cases of sexual violence against minors committed by priests as "exaggerations by the mass media aimed at discrediting the Church".

Father Gerald O'Collins, former professor of moral theology at the Papal University in Rome, and teacher of many of the Catholic Church's current top Cardinals and Bishops, welcomed the new catalogue of modern sins.

"I think the major point is that priests who are hearing confessions are not sufficiently attuned to some of the real evils in our world," he told the BBC News website. "They need to be more aware today of the social face of sin - the inequalities at the social level. They think of sin too much on an individual level.

"It was interesting that these remarks came from the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary," he said. "I can't remember a time when it was so concerned about issues such as environmental pollution and social injustice. It's a new way of thinking."

The original Seven deadly Sins were, or are:
**Pride -Envy -Gluttony -Lust - Anger - Greed
And Sloth**



"Quit worrying about corroborating your sources—it's not as if anyone's going to take all this literally."

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