

HUMANISTS

of FORT WORTH

Volume 14, Number 10

Happy



Humanist

October, 2013

This newsletter is presented by the Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW), Texas for its members.

The "Happy Humanist" symbol is presented by IHEU (International Humanist and Ethical Union).

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NEXT MEETING

October 9, 2013 7:00 PM

SPEAKER: Ann Sutherland, PhD

TOPIC: Issues related to FWISD.

More on page 4.

The *Humanists of Fort Worth* (HoFW) meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Westside Unitarian Universalist Building, 901 Page Ave.

! Thanks !

Many 'thank-yous' to the members and friends who are assisting with the cleanup and rearrangement duties after our meetings. It is much appreciated.

If you are interested in lending a hand please see one of the Board Members.

! Thanks !



THE AFFIRMATIONS OF HUMANISM: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES



WE ARE COMMITTED to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems.

WE DEPLORE efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.

WE BELIEVE that scientific discovery and technology can contribute to the betterment of life.

WE BELIEVE in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities.

WE ARE COMMITTED to the principle of separation of church and state.

WE CULTIVATE the arts of negotiation and compromise as a means of resolving differences and achieving mutual understanding.

WE ARE CONCERNED with securing justice and fairness in society and with eliminating discrimination and intolerance.

WE BELIEVE in supporting the disadvantaged and the handicapped so that they will be able to help themselves.

WE ATTEMPT to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, nationality, creed, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity and strive to work together for the common good of humanity.

WE WANT TO PROTECT and enhance the earth, to preserve it for future generations, and to avoid inflicting needless suffering on other species.

WE BELIEVE in enjoying life here and now and in developing our creative talents to their fullest.

WE BELIEVE in the cultivation of moral excellence.

WE RESPECT the right to privacy. Mature adults should be allowed to fulfill their aspirations, to express their sexual preferences, to exercise reproductive freedom, to have access to comprehensive and informed health-care, and to die with dignity.

WE BELIEVE in the common moral decencies: altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, responsibility. Humanist ethics is amenable to critical, rational guidance. There are normative standards that we discover together. Moral principles are tested by their consequences.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED with the moral education of our children. We want to nourish reason and compassion.

WE ARE ENGAGED by the arts no less than by the sciences.

WE ARE CITIZENS of the universe and are excited by the discoveries still to be made in the cosmos.

WE ARE SKEPTICAL of untested claims to knowledge, and we are open to novel ideas and seek new departures in our thinking.

WE AFFIRM HUMANISM as a realistic alternative to theologies of despair and ideologies of violence and as a source of rich personal significance and genuine satisfaction in the service to others.

WE BELIEVE in optimism rather than pessimism, hope rather than despair, learning in the place of dogma, truth instead of ignorance, joy rather than guilt or sin, tolerance in the place of fear, love instead of hatred, compassion over selfishness, beauty instead of ugliness, and reason rather than blind faith or irrationality.

WE BELIEVE in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings.

by PAUL KURTZ

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Choose the category that best fits your needs.

See the Treasurer, Dolores Ruhs, or a member of the Board for an application.

Pay in cash or mail the application, with your check, to:

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer-HoFW

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NOTE:

If you do not have access to the internet, the Newsletter may be mailed to you for an additional annual fee of \$12.00.

PRESENTATION FOR OCTOBER MEETING

Ann Sutherland, PhD

Trustee, FWISD
District 6

Ann will discuss issues related to Fort Worth schools and the school board.

An extensive interview with Ms. Sutherland was conducted by Eric Griffey of the Fort Worth Weekly and appeared in the September 11-17 issue.

If her presentation is as charged as the interview, it should prove to be an exciting evening.

From the . . .



. . . Sam Baker

THE ILLUSION OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

To my great surprise, on September 12th I actually received a reply to an email I sent almost three months earlier to Congresswoman Granger about the reasons she gave in her newsletter for voting against Obamacare. Her newsletter stated that, "many [small businesses] have expressed serious concerns about the impact the health care law will have on their companies and employees," and that she shared many of these concerns.

In my email, I asked Granger:

Have you ever expressed concerns about people who have pre-existing conditions and cannot get health insurance coverage because no health insurance company will sell it to them?

What have you done to curtail the explosive rise in health care costs and the annual double digit rise in the cost of health insurance premiums over the last 20 years?

Don't you and other federal employees buy your health care plan from an online health care exchange? Why is such an exchange good for you but bad for everyone else?

Here's her reply in full:

Dear Mr. Baker,

Thank you for contacting me in support of the health care law. I appreciate having your views on this important issue.

I understand your support for the new health care law. While I am opposed to the law, I do share your support for a number of its provisions. We must preserve important solutions such as guaranteeing coverage for pre-existing conditions, allowing children to stay on their parent's insurance until age 26, and eliminating lifetime dollar limits on insurance coverage.

However, the new law does not address skyrocketing health care costs or the long-term financial stability of Medicare, and it imposes excessive burdens on small businesses. Additionally, the health care law did not achieve its most important objective - to make health care more affordable and more accessible. These are just a few of the reasons why I voted against the legislation in 2010.

Again, thank you for contacting me. I hope you will continue to keep me informed on the issues that are important to you. For more information on my work in Congress, or to sign up to receive my e-newsletter, please visit the 12th District's website at <http://kaygranger.house.gov>.

Sincerely,

Kay Granger
Member of Congress

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Note that she criticizes Obamacare for not addressing skyrocketing health care costs but fails to reply to, or even acknowledge, my question to her asking what she has done to curtail those costs and the cost of health care premiums. At the very least she could have replied with some ideas about she thinks should be done to control costs. Does she have any ideas? Has she thought about this issue? If not, what is she doing in Congress?

She also fails to answer, or even acknowledge, my other question asking why it's a good thing for her to be able to choose her health care insurance from an online exchange but it is not a good idea for everyone else. Does she think she deserves an online market but her constituents don't (like, presumably, she thinks she deserves to have over 70% of her health premiums paid by the government but we don't)? Why not have the courage to say so? What good is having a representative in Congress if he or she won't even answer a constituent's questions about the most important issues facing the nation? My so-called representative works full time for almost everything I oppose. Right now she is working 24/7 to make sure I cannot buy health insurance.

The most preposterous thing about our system of so-called representative government is the idea that someone has representation in a congressional district drawn by the state government to insure the election of the candidate from the opposing party. The reality is that our system insures that up to 49% of the people in a district have no

no representation in the government at all. What happened to "no taxation without representation?"

Our teachers lied to us. They led us to believe that we have the best form of government in the world. They didn't bother to tell us that the U.S. has one of the least democratic systems of all modern democracies.

What's the purpose of American education--enlightenment or indoctrination?

Sam

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

The *Affordable Care Act* was passed by Congress and then signed into law by the President on March 23, 2010.

On June 28, 2012 the Supreme Court rendered a *final decision* to uphold the health care law.

Does It Matter That Atheists Are Smarter Than Believers?

Posted: 08/14/2013 3:09 pm



[Rob Brooks](#)

Evolutionary biologist and author

News just in, guaranteed to stir smug nods from non-believers and incite irritation among the devout: intelligence correlates negatively with religious belief. You may have seen similar - or contradictory -- reports in the past. That's because scores of studies have asked if religiosity is associated with intelligence. But a just-published [meta-analysis](#) in [Personality and Social Psychology Review](#) considered the evidence from 63 different studies. Overall, the meta analysis establishes the existence of a "reliable negative relation between intelligence and religiosity".

University of Rochester psychologists Miron Zuckerman and Jordan Silberman, together with Judtih A. Hall from Boston's Northeastern University, gathered 80 years of published studies that estimate correlations between religious belief or behavior (like attendance at religious services) and intelligence. By intelligence, they mean analytic intelligence, also known as the [g-factor](#), which [captures the](#) "ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience." Only 2 of the 63 studies found statistically significant positive correlations between religiosity and intelligence, whereas 35 showed significant negative correlations.

Intelligence linked more tightly to religious belief than religious behavior. While some studies showed that smarter children were less likely to believe, the pattern was weakest among school-age subjects. The links grow stronger in

adulthood and remained strong at older ages. Intelligence at one age also predicted religiosity some years later -- an additional indication that intelligence shapes religiosity.

Here, then, is one of those thorny issues, guaranteed to stir circular discussion. It confirms what many atheists and agnostics have always felt -- that the mere flexing of one's intellectual fibres, particularly when accompanied by the scientific method, leads a great many smart people from the path of religious belief.

And yet the finding, and the very act of me writing this column, drips with confrontational implications. Does the fact that non-believers are, on average, more intelligent than believers also imply that the religious are all low-g? Or that believers are inferior?

Of course not. The ranges overlap, and many very smart people are, or profess outwardly to be, believers. And I'm sure most people know some rather dull atheists or agnostics, too.

It's What You Do With It

There's a cringe factor at play here, too. Many people who flirt with unbelief can't quite bring themselves to accept that the vast majority of humanity who profess a belief in one or more deities are somehow missing the obvious fact that gods don't exist. This -- the very embodiment of humanist humility -- probably keeps a good chunk of non-practicing folk from admitting -- even to themselves -- their absence of faith.

That same unwillingness to call believers dumb, even implicitly, underpins the cringe many secularists experience at the term [Bright](#) -- an

Continued on page 8 >>>>

adjective turned into a noun by a vibrant community who organize around their [naturalistic worldview](#). Prominent brights include atheist pin-ups Dan Dennett, Margaret Downey, and skeptic James Randi.

[Richard Dawkins](#) -- another Bright -- gave atheist intellectual superiority a fine point in [The God Delusion](#). I've long supported Dawkins, excusing his haughtiness as old-school Oxbridge irascibility. But his [clumsy recent tweets](#) about the state of science in the contemporary Islamic societies show just how obnoxiously patronizing his view of religious people has become. Perhaps those who doubt but can't bring themselves to admit that believers are wrong or ignorant, are timid? But perhaps they are wise?

What CAN we learn

Beyond the posturing or smug self-assurances, can any good come from considering the links between intelligence and belief? I believe that it can. In understanding how those associations arise, we learn about the nature of intelligence, the nature of belief, and -- just maybe -- how to build a world that transcends ignorance, nepotism, exploitation and mumbo-jumbo.

Education, particularly in the sciences, tends also to [diminish belief](#). One can see why some big religious institutions, with the most to lose from the progress of secularism, proudly foster spectacular ignorance like Kentucky's [Creation Museum](#). That is not to say that all religious outreach propagates ignorance, but only that many organizations -- historic and contemporary -- do a pretty good job of it, and seem to benefit directly as a result.

The new meta-analysis by Zuckerman, Silberman and Hall does a thoughtful job of considering the processes that might cause the association between intelligence and religiosity. They discuss three main suites of ideas, none exclusive of the others, underlying what might be quite complex dynamics:

Intelligent people adopt analytic thinking styles. Last year I posted about how a

few simple exercises in [analytic thinking can erode belief](#). Folks who score lower for g tend to rely more heavily on intuitive thinking styles, which tend to suit religious learning.

Religion confers on adherents benefits such as building secure social attachment, mandating self-control and building a sense of self-worth. On top of that it can provide rules by which to navigate difficult social and moral waters: monogamy, loyalty, commitment. People who do well on intelligence tests tend also to find these areas easier to navigate unaided. Nobody does so perfectly, of course, but perhaps intelligent people have less need, on average, for religious belief and practices.

That said, perhaps the high self-confidence and self-esteem that often accompany intelligence give people a confidence -- often misplaced -- that they can navigate life's trickier passages without assistance, supernatural or otherwise.

END

“By all means let's be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains drop out.”

Richard Dawkins

AMERICA, AMERICA, GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE . . .

Sept. 11, 2013

Don Ruhs, Editor-Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW) Newsletter

From Wiki Answers:

On September 11th, 2001 two planes were flown into the World Trade Center. The first plane hit the North tower at approximately 8:46am, it burned for about 102 minutes and then collapsed. The second plane hit the South tower at approximately 9:03am, it burned for about 56 minutes and then collapsed. 2,974 lives were lost in the 9/11 attacks. 19 were hijackers, 246 were on the planes, 2,603 in NY both in the towers and on the ground and 125 at the Pentagon. 55 were military and the rest were civilians. 24 people still remain listed as missing.

While watching Good Morning America (ABC) a little while ago, I heard a vocal group singing, “America”, in remembrance of the disastrous attacks on The World Trade Center and Pentagon twelve years ago this morning. And I began thinking, somewhat seriously, about those *eight words*. I realize I may be coming from a nebulous position, that is, of *thinking*. Perhaps I should just knuckle down and believe those *eight words* without thinking! Naah!!

But, seriously now, just what is this “grace” that a “god” has supposedly “shed” on our nation? Couldn’t the very incident these singers were alluding to have been avoided had there been a god to stop it? Couldn’t the loss of those thousands of lives, not to mention the grief and sadness to their families, had been spared had there but been a god to intervene?

From what I learned from American History, I don’t believe those native tribes, who were here long before the Europeans arrived had any idea of the kinds of gods they were bringing with them. They were, of course, the gods of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Quaker, Puritan and other churches of the time. And don’t think for an instant that these various denominations worshipped the same gods. In fact, they did not. Each denomination insisted that the others were “in sin” by worshiping “false gods” and they were determined to convert those others by whatever means they could, into believing in their own “one true god” in order to be “saved.”

An excellent book on the activities that took place in Colonial America (pre-Revolution) would be: **“Roger Williams and The Creation of the American Soul”** by John M. Barry, (2012) Viking Press. Born in London, Eng, in 1603, Williams came to America in 1631. Although having been trained and ordained as a minister, he regarded the Church of England to be corrupt and false. He eventually arrived at the position of being a Separatist. “He put forth three principles that were central to his subsequent career; separatism, freedom of religion, and *separation of church and state*.” Sound a bit futuristic? For a man of his day, one might even think he was “humanistic.” Although a devout Christian, he was, as a separatist, apparently thinking well ahead of his time.

Let’s not forget: “America, God shed His grace on thee.”

. . . AND CROWNED THY GOOD WITH BROTHERHOOD . . .

To continue with the theme of this essay; how could anyone condone the obvious negligence of a “loving god” who would *allow* the inhumane atrocities committed against those native Americans, a.k.a. “American Indians”? And I say “allow” because if an all-loving, all-powerful god stood by and watched, and permitted, those atrocities to happen, that god is guilty, even more so, than any person on Earth for the pain and sorrow inflicted on those people! He/she is an evil god to say the least! What kinds of laws did they break? What sins did they

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>>> Continued from page 9

commit? Other than having differences in skin color, language, religious practices, other living habits, etc., I can see nothing that they should have been held accountable for. But God did nothing on their behalf.

NOTHING !

A moving expose' of the treatment of the American "Indians" may be found in the "documented account of the systematic plunder of the American Indians during the second half of the nineteenth century, battle by battle, massacre by massacre, broken treaty by broken treaty."^[1] A sad testimony of how a group of human beings were treated by their fellow man, their "brothers" in a nation "under God". And, this god had no compassion for these people. NONE! "What happened to Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Cochise, Red Cloud, Little Wolf and Sitting Bull as their people were killed or driven onto reservations during decades of broken promises, oppression, and war?"^[1] Indeed, what did happen? These people were treated with no respect; they were herded like animals off their ancient tribal lands. And for what? Simply because they were "savages" and not "real" people.

Moving a bit ahead . . .

In accordance with the Holy(?) Bible^[2] our nation early on continued with the ownership of "servants" (bondsmen, bondswomen, slaves). Yes, that holy (?) book not only condones and supports slavery it commands slaves to "obey" their masters. And, being the dutiful god-believers they were, those "masters" made every effort to follow their god's commands. And, being the dutiful god-believers they were they "believed" they had the right to physically dominate these people, their servants, their slaves, their "property." They had the right to buy and sell their property. They had the right to separate the children from their parents to be sold, or traded, as merchandise. And as these servants were considered to be "property" they could be used as sex-slaves in any manner their masters saw fit.

Let's not forget: "America, God shed His grace on thee."

Recently we've been seeing, and hearing, the heart-rending news concerning the death of many of our citizens in America because of devastating rains and floods. Many homes and businesses have been destroyed. People are absolutely frustrated, confused, and angry about what's been happening. And yet, they pray. Why? If there were a god to hear their prayers and nothing changed, what is the point of praying? Surely an Almighty God could stop the rains and the flooding! But God did nothing on their behalf. N O T H I N G !

Let's also not forget: "... (God) crowned thy good with brotherhood" . . .

And let's not forget the persecution, bullying, and murdering, still taking place in today's America, much of it being fomented from the God-loving Christian pulpits. I refer to the treatment of our LGBT sisters and brothers; yes, the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender community. They ARE human beings. None of us are able to choose how we are born. Perhaps some did make a choice but, still, they are HUMAN BEINGS and as such are entitled to *freedom of choice*. The God-believers need to back off and let them live their lives without harassment!

From a respondent to Wikipedia:

LGBT refers to people who don't fit the normal sexual orientation profile, but who are otherwise equal to all other people in every important respect, and who should be given opportunities and rights equal to those of all others. Some of my current and former best friends are lesbian or gay, and I am straight.

[1] *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*, by Dee Brown, 1970, inside front cover.

[2] Lev 25:44-46; Deut 15:12-15; Eph 6:5,9; Col 4:1.

DOM

Richard Dawkins
(1941-)
Evolutionary Biologist, Author

My respect for the Abrahamic religions went up in the smoke and choking dust of September 11th. The last vestige of respect for the taboo disappeared as I watched the Day of Prayer in Washington Cathedral, where people of mutually incompatible faiths united in homage to the very force that caused the problem in the first place: RELIGION! It is time for people of intellect, as apposed to people of faith, to stand up and say "Enough!" Let our tribute to the dead be a new resolve: to respect people for what they individually think, rather than respect groups for what they were collectively brought up to believe.

2001

In the 2012 House elections, Democrats won the majority of the votes, 48.75% to the Republicans' 47.6%, but Republicans won 234 of the seats while the Democrats won only 201 seats. Why? Because years ago Tom DeLay understood the inherent unfairness in the concept of single member districts and worked to exploit it.

Sam

Editorial . . . **Know Your Bible? 14**

Don Ruhs

All Bible quotes are taken from the King James Version (KJV).

From: Various sources, including the Holy Bible.

! Cannibalism ! In the Holy Bible?

Read on dear friend and learn for yourself. And for your children? I'm presenting just a few examples.

Cannibalism: an animal that eats the flesh of its own kind; **endocannibalism:** eating the flesh of dead relatives.

Lev. 26:29 *And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

Deut. 28:53-57 *And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee . . . etc.*

2 Kings 6:25-28 (At this time there was a great famine in Samaria) Read verses 25-27.

Verse 28: *And the king said unto her, "What aileth thee?" And she answered, "This woman said unto me 'Give thy son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow'." "So we boiled my son and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she had hid her son."*

Jer. 19:9 *And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they eat everyone the flesh of his friend . . . etc.*

See also: **Lam. 4:10** and **Ezek. 5:10**.

We must remember that the Holy(?) Bible is the inerrant work of an "Almighty God." Or so we are told, but, is it something we should be teaching our children? Is it something that should be included in our schools' textbooks?

According to our fundamentalist religionists this would be known as: **"Intelligent Design"**.

Don

**HUMANISTS OF FORT WORTH
MONTHLY MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chair Sam Baker. There were twenty-three persons present, including six visitors.

Our speaker this month was Virginia Thornton, B.A., Cornell University. She spoke to us about having grown up in South Texas with very politically active Catholic parents, and the interplay between Christian Left activism and its human-rights-centered ethic in which she still believes, with her conversion to atheism in young adulthood. Her description of her replacement of former belief in a supreme being with a humanist ethic, facilitated by the study of the ideas of Thomas Jefferson, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and others provided a very articulate and stimulating anatomy of her intellectual and ethical evolving and the resulting confidence of knowing where she stands and why.

After a break for refreshments, our speaker took questions from the audience and led a group discussion further into the issues involved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fisher, Secretary

Humanists of Fort Worth

September 2013

Humanists of Ft. Worth (HoFW)

Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 11-Sep-2013

Beginning Balance 14-Aug-2013 **\$1,143.12**

CREDITS	DATE	AMOUNT	
Dues	9/11/2013	\$40.00	
Snack Donations	9/11/2013	5.66	
TOTAL CREDITS			<u>\$45.66</u>

DEBITS	ACTIVITY	Ck. #	DATE	AMOUNT
Party for Russell	Farewell	429	9/11/13	\$49.48
VOID	VOID	430		0.00
Pam Hughes	Food for party	431	9/6/13	43.82
Treasurer	Coffee Service	432	9/6/13	10.99
Sam Baker	Wine & Glasses	433	9/11/13	25.94

TOTAL DEBITS **\$130.23**

TOTAL CREDITS LESS DEBITS **\$84.57**

Ending Balance 11-Sep-13 **\$1,058.55**

Attest:

Signature: *Dolores M. Ruhs* Date: 20-Sep-2013

Dolores M. Ruhs Treasurer

Don Ruhs Clerk

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Board Member	Don Ruhs
Board Member	Dick Trice

c:My Documents/HoFW Treasurer's Reports MSXL 20-Sep-2013

Fundamentalist Loses Christian Faith

While Writing Book on Evolution

“Evolving out of Eden” Refutes All Attempts to Reconcile “Theistic Evolution” with Science

VALLEY, Wash. (05/29/13) — A new book by two ex-Christians argues that Christian theology and evolutionary science cannot be reconciled, no matter how sincere the attempt.

“Evolving out of Eden: Christian Responses to Evolution” (Tellektual Press, March 2013)

is co-authored by biblical scholar Robert M. Price and Edwin A. Suominen.

“When we first started on this book, I was a struggling Christian,” Suominen said. “I had accepted the reality of evolution, but could not see a way to resolve the conflict between science and my inherited faith. And now that the last page is written, I know that there isn’t one.”

The book began as a collaboration between Robert M. Price, a biblical scholar and atheist, and Suominen, who was a believing Christian at the start. Both accepted the reality of evolution, and agreed to research its theological implications and the various ways that Christian writers have tried to smooth over the conflict between science and faith.

“There are a lot of books and web sites that try to reassure the faithful that they can safely disregard or reinterpret scientific findings,” Suominen said. “But it just doesn’t work. Genetics is real, and Genesis isn’t. It pained me to finally acknowledge this, but there is no deliberate design of humans or any other forms of life.”

While the authors themselves no longer consider themselves religious, they are not anti-religious and both hold a great deal of respect and affection for religion, Christianity, the Bible and Christian theology.

“After 40 years in fundamentalist Christianity, I’m not ready to call myself an atheist,” Suominen said. “But after co-authoring this book, I can’t see where there’s any room for a god.”

“Evolving out of Eden” begins by providing a crash course in evolutionary theory, as understood and

explained by leading scientists in the field. Next, the book delves into the vast history of biblical creation stories and explains how they came to be and what they meant to their writers. The authors, Price and Suominen, explain how Christians through the centuries have interpreted and re-interpreted these stories in order to make them fit with an ever-expanding scientific knowledge. Religion originally provided the explanations, they note, but now it is what requires so much explaining. And they illustrate how these attempts to combine science with Creationism have always failed.

“Evolving out of Eden” is available in paperback and Kindle editions at Amazon.com. It is also available in Nook.



Robert M. Price holds a PhD in systematic theology from Drew University (1981) and a PhD in New Testament from Drew (1993). He is the author of over a dozen books and his own New Testament translation. He occasionally attends Episcopalian services where he sings, enjoys the stained glass, and keeps his mouth shut.

Edwin Suominen holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Washington (1995), where his senior project wound up being the subject of fourteen U.S. patents, among several others he holds. He has retired from practice as a registered patent agent to write books rather than patents. Before writing this book, he devoted a year of personal study about evolutionary science and its intersection with theology.



Church

&

STATE



the BOOK NOOK

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The 1st Amendment to the Constitution of the United States—"The Establishment Clause."

From: *Americans United for the Separation of Church & State* September 2013, page 22

AROUND THE **W**ORLD

Church of England to Control Some State Schools

Education officials in Britain have proposed allowing the Church of England to assume control of thousands of State-run schools.

Under the plan, the schools will become privately funded academies. Anglican bishops will have the power to appoint school governors for these institutions, and the schools would be accountable to the church.

The church already runs more than 5,000 schools in the United Kingdom. The country has a long tradition of merging church and school. Religion News Service reported that there were no government-run schools in the country prior to 1870.

The move is opposed by the National Secular Society. Its president, Terry Sanderson, stated, "The Church of England is rapidly changing its focus from its primary purpose - church worship - which has failed spectacularly, with empty pews all over the country, to getting its message out in schools."

This space is intended to focus attention on books, authors, subjects and articles that may be of interest to humanists, agnostics, atheists, and freethinkers.

AMERICAN GOSPEL:

GOD, THE FOUNDING FATHERS, AND THE MAKING OF A NATION

By Jon Meacham

Random House Pub. Group, 2007

A review:

Meacham sets the record straight on the history of religion in American public life. Faith--meaning a belief in a higher power, and the sense that we are God's chosen people--has always been at the heart of our national experience, from Jamestown to the Constitutional Convention to the Civil Rights Movement to September 11th. And yet, first and foremost, America is a nation founded upon the principles of liberty and freedom. Every American is free to exercise his own faith or no faith at all. And so a balance is struck, between *public religion* and *private religion*; and religious belief is distinct from morality. As he explains, the well-known "wall" between church and state has always separated private religion from the business of state.

Anonymous

I agree with the basic premise of the book, however, I do not subscribe to any idea that our nation cannot survive, nor flourish, without guidance from some, as yet unproven, invisible force.

As Meacham quotes from Thomas Jefferson:

Ideas must be distinct before reason can act upon them, and no man ever had a distinct idea of the trinity. It's the mere abracadabra of the mountebanks calling themselves priests of Jesus.

Don