

Central Minnesota *Friends Free of Theism*

November
2009

Friends Free of Theism (FFOT) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the separation of church and state and provides education and community for freethinkers in the central Minnesota region.

Lying for Jesus? The Intelligent Design Movement

By Charles Wallace, Colorado Springs, CO

Just last month, Shepherd Project Ministries and Focus on the Family sponsored “The Legacy of Darwin Intelligent Design Conference: Intelligent Design vs. Naturalistic Evolution 150 years after The Origin of Species.”¹ The conference was held in Castle Rock, CO approximately thirty minutes north of Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs.

Presenters included Dr. Stephen Meyer and Dr. David West from the Discovery Institute, an organization whose goal is to replace modern science with “a science consonant with Christian and theistic convictions.”² Critics of the Discovery Institute (DI) call it the “Dishonesty Institute” for what they say is disingenuous and overt misrepresentations of evolution, and for its censorship. Although the DI claims to promote free speech, multiple sources reveal that they attempted to censor videos on YouTube that were critical of them.³

Another presenter scheduled for “The Legacy of Darwin” was Dr. Michael Behe, a professor of biological science from Lehigh University. Dr. Behe believes that “irreducibly complex” biochemical systems are evidence for ID (god). Dr. Behe's claim that ID is science is officially rejected by Lehigh University.⁴

What is Intelligent Design?

The phrase “Intelligent Design” in its broadest sense refers to a non-scientific teleological argument for the existence of god. A simplistic example is the argument that the universe, or a part within it, appears to be too complex, ordered or purposeful to have occurred without having been designed by god. ID is nothing more than an argument from ignorance in which god is invoked to fill in the gaps of scientific knowledge. As science has increased our understanding of the natural world, the role left for god has become exceedingly smaller, if not totally unnecessary.

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FFOT Monthly Membership Meetings

When: The third Monday of the month at 7:00 pm

Where: St. Cloud Public Library or the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall

See the FFOT website Events Calendar on the FFOT website for up-to-date information about meetings and events: <http://freeoftheism.org/>



Find pins and more at the online freethought store:

www.evolvefish.com

Atheist TV Programs

Great news! The Secular Student Association at St. Cloud State University has taken over sponsorship of each of the three weekly atheist TV programs as well as the five Friday night “special movie” programs.

As many of you know, we were in need of volunteers after the many years of Jack's hard work and dedication. We are so excited that this new local atheist group has taken this on and will keep it alive for our community. The full TV program list is now the last page of the newsletter.

Thanksgiving



According to Dale McGowan, editor of the book *Parenting Beyond Belief*, celebrating Thanksgiving is a holiday in which “no eavesdropping deity is required.” He explains “There is additional opportunity to note that the Puritan pilgrims were pursuing the kind of freedom of religious observance to which secularists should be devoted...”

Mr. McGowan and contributors give insight and specific ideas for secular families to celebrate traditions, seasons and holidays. *Parenting Beyond Belief* can be ordered from a variety of online sources including www.evolvefish.com



FFOT Winter Solstice Celebration!

FFOT will celebrate the Winter Solstice on Saturday December 19th at 5:00 PM at the home of Tom and Jan Stavros (2746 21st Avenue South in Saint Cloud).

Guests are invited. Please bring a dish to pass that will feed about 12 people (Bring what you like). We will furnish plates, silverware glasses and beverages (beer, wine and soft drinks).

Please call (529-0146) or email Tom at yasou@charter.net if you plan to attend.

We will take donations to Anna Marie's Shelter. Anna Marie's is a local safe house for abused women and their children. Items most needed by the shelter include: Garbage bags (13 gallon and 33 gallon), liquid laundry soap, toilet bowl cleaner, 409 multi-purpose cleaner, bathroom cleaner (Scrubbing Bubbles, Lysol Tub and Tile), disinfectant wipes, Lysol Spray, floor cleaners (ie. Mr. Clean), hand and body lotion, gift certificates (Cashwise, Sam's Club, Shopko, Target, K-Mart, etc.) canned vegetables, canned fruit, sauces (spaghetti, pizza, tomato), pasta, soups, crackers, rice, cereals, 100% juices, cooking oil, sugar, ketchup, coffee, creamer, cakes mixes.

Freethought Organizations

American Atheists:

<http://www.atheists.org/events>

American Humanist Association:

<http://www.americanhumanist.org/conference/>

Atheist Alliance International:

<http://www.atheistalliance.org/>

Atheists for Human Rights:

<http://www.atheistsforhumanrights.org/>

Atheists United:

<http://www.atheistsunited.org/>

Camp Quest

www.camp-quest.org

Freedom From Religion Foundation

www.ffrf.org

Humanists of Minnesota

www.humanistsofmn.org

Lake Superior Freethinkers

www.lsfreethinkers.org

Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers

<http://maaf.info/>

Minnesota Atheists

www.mnatheists.org

Red River Freethinkers

www.redriverfreethinkers.org

Secular Coalition for America:

<http://www.secular.org/>

[Lying for Jesus by Charles Wallace, continued from page 1]

Before modern science came into existence, god was invoked to explain anything in nature that man could not understand. How did the earth, sun, moon, and stars come into being? God created them ex nihilo.⁵ How did life get created? God created the animals and plants, each according to their kind. Why do women suffer during childbirth? Why do snakes have no legs? Why do we die? Because of original sin.⁶ Why are their rainbows? It's a sign from god that he will not destroy the earth in another flood.⁷

As modern science developed man began to find natural explanations for the same questions that religion failed to correctly answer. Astronomy was able to demonstrate how the solar system formed. Geology revealed that the earth was ancient. Paleontology, biology, and genetics were able to unequivocally show that all life evolved from common ancestors. Women suffer in childbirth because evolutionary forces favored humans with large brains. Snakes evolved from reptiles with legs and slowly lost them as they became less useful. Death and suffering existed for millions of years before humans existed. As for the rainbow? There never was a global flood, and rainbows were around before there were any animals alive on earth who could even observe them.

Arguments from design for the existence of god -- that are not patently absurd -- are becoming increasingly fewer. Today the intelligent design movement has turned to more recent areas of scientific research in order to find any gaps in scientific knowledge in which they can forcibly insert a need for god. One area of science the intelligent design movement has chosen to assault is biochemical systems, since they believe they are too complex to have evolved. ID proponents, such as Dr. Behe, argue that some biochemical systems are irreducibly complex and must have been designed by an intelligent being; i.e., god. Although Dr. Behe works with the Discovery Institute in attacking evolution, Behe is a Roman Catholic who accepts that life evolved from a common ancestor.

Is Intelligent Design creationism?

The evidence clearly suggests that intelligent design is creationism repackaged to sound more scientific and less christian. In 1989 the pseudo-scientific book *Of Pandas and People* was published. It is considered to be the first book on intelligent design. What is interesting is that the 1987 draft of the book did not even use the phrase intelligent design. The draft of the book was altered after the Supreme Court decided in *Edwards v. Aguillard* that teaching creation science in public schools violated the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution. Subsequently, all the words based upon creationism in *Of Pandas and People* were changed to ones based upon intelligent design. The term "creationists" was changed accidentally to "cdesign proponentsists" clearing demonstrating "the missing link between creationism and intelligent design." From here on out I will refer to proponents of intelligent design as "intelligent design creationists."

Sources: 1) <http://shepherdproject.com/idconf/>; 2) The Wedge Strategy; 3) http://scienceblogs.com/dispatches/2009/06/di_stifles_criticism_on_youtub.php; 4) <http://www.lehigh.edu/bio/news/evolution.htm>; 5) The Nicene Creed states: "We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." The god of Genesis, however, does not actually create ex nihilo (out of nothing), but simply brings order out of chaos.; 6) Genesis 2:4-3:24; 7) Genesis 9:12-16

This was reprinted from blog posts on the Freethinkers of Colorado Springs website, with permission from the author. You can respond by visiting www.freethinkerscs.com

Panel Presentation: "Darwinian Revolution: Charles Darwin and His Influence on Science, Religion, and Society"

This November marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species." To celebrate the significance of this anniversary, we will have a panel presentation emphasizing and highlighting Darwin's influence across disciplines.

Date: November 12, 2009

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Gorecki 204 CSB

Panelists:

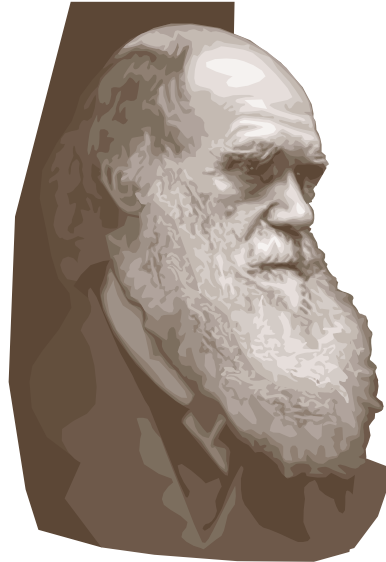
Fr. Wilfred Theisen, Professor Emeritus Physics
"The Popes and Darwin"

Emily Esch, Assistant Professor of Philosophy
"Darwin's Influence on What It Means to be Human"

Michael Livingston, Professor of Psychology
"Darwin and the Social Sciences"

Chuck Rodell, Professor of Biology
"Practical Applications of a Darwinian View"

Vincent Smiles, Professor of Theology
"Theology after Darwin"



The book has been described as the most significant single-authored book ever written. Its impact on western culture continues to expand as the richness of Darwin's ideas is melded to numerous realms of human thought and activity. In addition to establishing biological science, Darwin's explanations of evolution and the process of natural selection have had an impact on the social sciences, medicine, agriculture, philosophy, theology, literature, and virtually every form of human endeavor. As The Times of London wrote in 1909 on the 100th anniversary of CD's birth:

To no other man has it been given to effect a revolution in human thought so large, so pervading, so sudden, and yet so enduring. Darwin taught mankind to see all things in a new light, not only the mysteries of nature, great and small, the mysteries of existence and the innumerable objects of research, and the common things of everyday life. Darwin's gift was to sense the mystery of the diversification of living organisms, and his achievement was to make sense of it.

If we are going to teach creation science as an alternative to evolution, then we should also teach the stork theory as an alternative to biological reproduction

~Judith Hayes



ATHEIST FREETHOUGHT WEEKLY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

ALL PROGRAMS ARE BROADCAST ON CHARTER CABLE CHANNEL 12

- Sundays 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM: "ATHEIST BUNK BUSTERS"
(United States Atheists, Seattle)
- Tuesdays 7:30 PM to 8:00 PM: "THE ATHEIST VIEWPOINT"
(American Atheists, New Jersey)
- Thursdays 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM "THE ATHEIST EXPERIENCE"
(Atheists of Austin, Texas)
- 8:30 PM to 9:00 PM "ATHEIST'S TALK"
(Minnesota Atheists, Minneapolis)
- Fridays 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM "SPECIAL MOVIES" SEE ROTATION
SCHEDULE BELOW

FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL ATHEIST MOVIES FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- (October 30th) ("THE GOD WHO WASN'T THERE")
- November 6th: "SUNS OF GOD/THE CHRIST CONSPIRACY"
- November 13th: "ZEITGEIST"
- November 20th: "ZEITGEIST II: ADDENDUM"
- November 27th: "THE ATHEIST ROBERT INGERSOLL ON THE BIBLE"
- December 4th: "THE GOD WHO WASN'T THERE"
- December 11th: "SUNS OF GOD/THE CHRIST CONSPIRACY"
- December 18th: "ZEITGEIST"
- December 25th: "ZEITGEIST II: ADDENDUM"
(Happy Solstice!)
- January 1st: "THE ATHEIST ROBERT INGERSOLL ON THE BIBLE"
(Happy New Year of reason and rationalism!)

THANK YOU SECULAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION AT SCSU!